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HOURS OF PRAYER.

LOS ANGELES BAPTIST THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

HOURS OF PRAYER

IN THE

NOON PRAYER-MEETING,

FULTON STREET, NEW YORK.

EDITED BY

TALBOT W. CHAMBERS, D.D.,

One of the Pastors of the Collegiate Dutch Church.

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INTRODUCTORY NOTICE.

IN September, 1857, the Noon Prayer-Meeting was begun. In the autumn of the next year, the first printed volume concerning it was issued by the present publishers, having been prepared at their request by its author, the undersigned. This book, entitled, "The Noon Prayer-Meeting in the North Dutch Church, Fulton Street, New York," gave an account of the origin, character, and progress of the meeting, with some of its results. It met an urgent want of the community, and several large editions of it were sold. From time to time, the Board have been gratified to learn that its

pages have been blessed of God to the promotion of his cause.

Frequent inquiries have been made for some further statement of the results of this meeting of world-wide notoriety. With a view to meet these wishes, the Board entered into communication with a gentleman who has been familiar with the meeting from the beginning, and has often reported with fidelity and skill its most interesting proceedings. From him they obtained a considerable number of these reports, of the accuracy of which they were well assured. The material thus procured was placed in the hands of the editor, with the request that he would arrange it in such order as was possible, and accompany it occasionally with connecting remarks. He has done this work, and the result is now submitted to the Christian public.

It remains to say that neither he nor the Board are responsible for the accuracy of the facts stated, but only for that of the reports of them upon which the book is based. They think that the substantial correctness of the entire series commends them to the attention and confidence of all who are interested in the workings of divine grace.

TALBOT W. CHAMBERS.

This volume is approved, and is authorized for publication.

W. R. GORDON, Ch. Ex. Com.

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CHAPTER I.

INFLUENCE OF THE MEETING.

NOTHING is more remarkable in the history of this meeting than its constancy to its original type, as fixed by its founder, Mr. J. C. Lanphier, the lay missionary of the North Dutch Church. For fourteen years it has continued its daily exercises without in any degree departing from its early features. Its few simple rules for the preservation of order and the exclusion of personal or denominational interests have been rigidly observed, while in all else the largest scope has been given to the various manifestations of Christian life in prayer and praise and conference. No two meetings have ever been exactly alike. No one meeting has had its character or tone determined beforehand. All has been left to the instinctive promptings of the persons present, under

the guidance of Him who said that wherever two or three were gathered in His name, He was in the midst of them.

The consequence has been great variety and freshness in the exercises. Not unfrequently some have taken part who were not adapted to edify their brethren, a fact which nothing but a miracle could prevent in a gathering where speech is free to all. But this has easily been borne with, in view of its comparative rarity and of the counterbalancing benefits in the freedom which brought out many valuable utterances from those who otherwise had been silent. Christians of every name and type, and from all lands, have met on this common ground ; and their substantial agreement in the face of many local and ecclesiastical peculiarities has many a time proved a mighty stimulus and refreshing.

Often, too, there has been an appropriateness in the tone of a particular meeting to the circumstances of some one present there

for the first time, which has made it memorable in that person's experience.

In other cases, published reports of its proceedings have awakened great interest in distant parts of the country, and loud echoes have returned to gladden the hearts of disciples. These reports in all cases are due to the zeal of reporters or publishers—the persons in control of the meeting having no agency whatever in their production. Yet there seems no reason to doubt that they have been the means of great good. The instances which follow are a few selected out of many.

A MISSOURI MINISTER.

On one occasion, a total stranger to all present arose and said :

“I was in this meeting five years ago, and it was made a great blessing to me then. I was a member of the late General Assembly. I am a minister in middle Missouri. When I landed at the foot

of Courtlandt street, I made my way with all haste to this Fulton street Prayer-meeting, and I came ten minutes behind time. I had a duty to do, and I felt in a hurry to do it. Years have passed since then; but I never lost the savor and the impression of that single meeting upon my soul afterward. I got a new idea of prayer. I am young in the ministry, and am settled in a hard field at the West—in middle Missouri. When I went to my field of labor there was not a single professor of religion in the place. But I had got a new impulse to pray. I had got from this meeting five years ago, in that single meeting which I attended, more knowledge of the power of prayer than all I ever had before. I learned a lesson about prayer which I never had to unlearn—I learned how to pray.

“And now let me say, I went into a most unpromising field. All sorts of opinions and practices which were opposed to true religion prevailed. But I felt a joyful courage

in believing that God heard prayer, and that He gave the Holy Spirit in answer to prayer.

“One of the first things I did on commencing my labors was to pray for the outpouring of the Holy Spirit upon all the people. Then next I sent to this meeting and asked you to pray; and you did pray, and a shower of mercy descended in answer to our prayers. I often sent requests for prayer here, and I asked others to send them; and they came, and were earnestly remembered, and answers came down. O how rich those answers were. In process of a little time I had a little praying church. We kept up a constant communion in prayer with this meeting. You do not know it, perhaps; but we did. You do not know me, but I know this meeting well. In spirit, I am very often in it.”

A YOUNG CLERGYMAN.

On another occasion a young man said:

“It is now eight years since I was in this

meeting. I have reason to remember the occasion with everlasting gratitude and unutterable joy. I was in it for the first time about ten years ago. I look around and I see a few whom I saw then. Some of these I have never forgot.

“My mother heard of these meetings, and wrote to me from a far-distant place about them, and begged me to attend them. She was anxious for my salvation, and she sent here often for prayers for her son, living in the city, for his conversion. I came in here, obedient to her request, and heard one of the requests read. I knew it meant *me*. It must be my own dear, blessed mother who was thus seeking the mercy of God in my own behalf. God was pleased to awaken me to a sense of my condition. I shall never, *never* forget how some of you now before me prayed for my conversion, and how you all united in supplication for my salvation. God was pleased to answer prayer. In the old consistory room in the rear of this church,

where the meeting was then held, I found peace and pardon. It is a place ever dear to me. I love this prayer-meeting. I cannot be here without feelings of the strongest emotion. I remember the first time I attended; I never was indifferent about my soul after that. I was a mere youth in the midst of the temptations of this great city; but God had mercy on me, in answer to your prayers and those of my far-distant mother, and now I am a minister of the Gospel. I am preaching the unsearchable riches of Christ, and the glorious Gospel of the blessed God. I am the pastor of a small, but earnest, growing church, planted in a large and flourishing village, and God has been pleased to give me some souls as the crown of my rejoicing. Ten years ago I came into this meeting a mere boy. Now I am a man, and occupying a responsible place under the leadership of the Good Shepherd. I invoke your earnest prayers that God will make me

a useful and faithful minister of the Lord Jesus.”

The young clergyman spoke with deep and irrepressible emotion. His voice trembled, and he could scarcely restrain his tears while speaking. All hearts were moved.

FROM FOREIGN COUNTRIES.

Such testimonies as the ensuing are not infrequent.

A speaker said : “ I am from France, where we have a daily prayer-meeting exactly after this pattern. It is not so full ; but it is a place of wonderful prayer, and we receive just such gracious answers to prayer as you do here. It is the Fulton street Prayer-meeting repeated right over again. It is doing great good.”

Another said : “ I am from Spain. We have our daily prayer-meeting there, just as you do here. I am most happy to see so many in this holy place of prayer. Our

meeting is small, but is increasing. At first, we met in private. We were watched. We were in the land of the bloody inquisition. The same old persecuting spirit prevailed. When we went out of our little assemblies we said to each other, 'Do not speak of our meeting.' Now how changed! We meet openly and freely, with none to molest or make us afraid."

Another said: "I am from England. We have our daily prayer-meetings, fashioned upon this as a model, in various places in England, Scotland and Ireland. We know all about the Fulton street Prayer-meeting. The reports of this meeting are copied out of your religious papers into ours, and they go all over the kingdom of the British crown, and what occurs in this old church in your hours of prayer is felt to the remotest bounds of the British Empire, where the English language is read. You have no idea how much good is done by this meeting. I am glad to come in here and see such a large

assemblage. I rejoice in the catholic spirit which prevails here, so that this meeting is cosmopolitan in its character, and is not held in the interest of any particular denomination. And yet I am told that all the cost is borne by one, with the large-handed liberality that gives without stint or reluctance. God blesses her churches, in return, with abundant prosperity; and they that water are watered themselves. God bless the Reformed Church of these United States."

Not long after, there was read this request from missionaries in Turkey.

"ESKI PAGRA, WESTERN TURKEY,

"January 15, 1870.

"DEAR CHRISTIAN BRETHREN: We are all praying for the conversion of the chief Bulgarian in this city, whom Satan is using as his agent in persecuting Protestants. He has the zeal of Saul. Will you pray that he may become like Paul, with the same zeal rightly directed.

“We read of your meetings, and rejoice that God enables you to pray with that faith which ensures the answer.

“Yours, in the love of Christ.”

A YOUNG MAN FROM MAINE.

This young man came into one of the meetings and stood in the aisle, leaning against one of the columns. As the meeting proceeded, he seemed absorbed in the deepest attention. He came farther up the aisle, and leaned against another column. He stood thus through the first half hour, then he took a seat. The reporter made his way to him when the services were concluded, to make some inquiries. He was a fine-looking, intelligent young man, in robust health. He said he was from Maine; was the son of pious parents; had no previous knowledge of this meeting, but as he was passing the old church he saw the sign out—“Fulton street Prayer-meeting”—and seeing some persons

entering, he came in also. He said he had never been in such a prayer-meeting as he found this to be.

"I will be here to-morrow," said he. "I am interested to know more of this meeting."

The next day, sure enough, he was in again, occupying a seat in the back part of the church. His fine, intelligent face was all aglow with emotion. We made our way to him as soon as the benediction was pronounced, and expressed satisfaction at seeing him present again.

"Are you anxious to become a Christian?" we inquired.

"I am. My father and mother were Christians," he answered, "and why should not I be anxious to be a Christian? Why not?" he added.

"Why not?" we inquired. "Why not now? Why not here?—from this good hour be a believer on the Lord Jesus Christ?"

"I mean to try."

"Oh, no!" we said, "don't try. Trying

is not believing. Take Christ at his word, believing that he means what he says, as he says now to you and to every sinner, 'Him that cometh unto me, I will in no wise cast out.' These are the words of one who cannot speak anything but the truth, and would not promise what he would not perform."

We trust that he, like hundreds of others who have just stepped into the meeting, will find it none other than the House of God and the Gate of Heaven to his soul.

THE INTERESTED VISITOR.

This one came not by accident but of set purpose, as will be seen.

One day a perfect stranger came strolling into the old church, walking up and down an hour or two before the services, looking up at its grand arched roof, and then going up into the gallery and examining every part—its organ and all. His movements attracted the notice of the missionary who was sitting

and writing at his desk, and this dialogue took place between them :

“ Were you ever in this church before ? ” asked the missionary.

“ No, never, ” replied the stranger ; “ but being in the city, I was very anxious to come here and see for myself the place where prayer is wont to be made. I have a deep interest in this place of prayer. ”

“ Why so ? ” inquired the missionary. “ For what reason are you specially interested in this place of prayer ? ”

“ Let me tell you, ” said the stranger. “ If anybody has reason to love this holy place of prayer, it is I. Reason enough. I have a godly, praying wife at home—away at the West. From the New York religious papers she learned all about your meetings. She reads of them with profound interest. She reads of the many, many conversions in answer to prayer. I was an irreligious, careless man, with no concern about my everlasting welfare. She sometimes expostulated

with me for my neglect of the whole subject of religion, but I paid no heed to her exhortations. At length she began to send requests for prayer to this meeting in my behalf. Without any apparent cause, I all at once began to be anxious about my soul. I knew no reason why. The burden and anxiety increased, until at length I submitted my whole soul to Jesus, and took up his easy yoke and his light burden—easy and light I find them—according to our Saviour's promise that they shall be.

“For a long time I never knew—even after my conversion—that I had been prayed for in these meetings. One day my wife said to me, ‘Do you know that the Fulton street meeting has prayed for you many a time?’”

“‘No; how should I know it? How was it?’”

“‘Well, I will tell you. I became full of faith that God hears and answers prayer, and thus I was persuaded to send requests for prayer for my dear husband's conversion. I

thought I would not tell you till sufficient time had gone by to convince me and yourself of the reality of the great change. I believe you are a converted man in answer to prayer; and if ever you go to New York, you must go and see the place where the people of God united with me in pleading for your salvation.'

"This brings me *here* this morning, and this clothes every portion of this building with special interest, as the place where prayer has been offered for me, which has been answered in imparting to me eternal life. Why should I not love this holy place of prayer, where so many have found peace in believing in Jesus? I am here for the first time—perhaps for the only and last time; but I am here—a monument of God's amazing grace in hearing and answering prayer."

The missionary urged him to stay to the meeting, and tell the assembly what he had communicated to him; but the stranger said

he could not tarry, as he was obliged to leave the city at once : but he could not go till he had complied with his wife's request and his own desire to see the place. " You see, sir, I have good reason to love this place, and I shall ever pray that all prayer offered here may be heard and answered from on high."

CHAPTER II.

PRAYER.

THE meeting being mainly devotional, the nature of prayer was often made the theme of remark and illustration.

THE MYSTERY OF PRAYER.

On one occasion, an experienced minister, after alluding to the wondrous results of believing supplication, continued in this strain :

“Yet, I have never heard the power of prayer defined. No one can tell in what it consists. We cannot tell what it is. The more we try to do it, the more unfit we feel ourselves to be for the task. Who can put into words what passes between the soul and God when prayer has power with Him? I acknowledge that with me language comes short. I can say nothing when I think God

will be prevailed upon by such worms as we. What is it that prevails?

“I sometimes hear prayer that I feel will have power with God, and will be followed with a gracious answer. How do I know anything about it? I am no judge of another man’s heart—no, not even of my own. I have heard prayers offered here that I felt were heaven-inspired, and I felt sure a blessing was to follow, and rarely have I been disappointed.

“You were called upon by a father to give thanks to God for the conversion of his three children, with whom the father and mother sat down to the communion table together for the first time the first Sabbath in May. The request from a little boy came into this meeting in 1860—a boy six years old—that we would pray that himself and his little sisters, four and eight, might all be converted. I remember, as if it had been only yesterday, the prayer that followed the reading of that request. I felt then that these children

would all be converted in answer to that prayer. Their conversion did occur very soon. Whether it was the answer to their parents' prayers, or theirs and this meeting's combined, I know not. But I have no doubt they were converted in answer to prayer that prevailed with God, and so had power. These children have been hopeful Christians for some time ; were converted when too young to join the church. I do not think children are ever too young to join the church, if they are Christians. The only difficulty is in distinguishing between what is education and what is regeneration in the experience of children. But I have thought it was just as easy to have evidence in the one case as in the other—adults and children. I have great faith in the early conversion of children, and in a long ministry I have found they are more likely to turn out useful and advancing Christians than those converted at a more advanced period of life.

“The power of prayer does not consist in

the language which is used, nor the emotions which are manifested. But prayer has power. Elijah prayed, and the heavens gave no rain by the space of three years and six months. And again he prayed for rain, and he knew it was coming, though his servant came many times to say there was not a cloud in the sky—no, not even the size of a man's hand. How did Elijah know the rain was coming? He knew—for he had the answer in his own bosom—long before he sent word to the king that there was the sound of an abundance of rain.

“God speaks to the soul, and the soul speaks to God in this matter of prayer; but what is said between the soul and God can never be put into words. We often have assurance of answer to our prayers long before the answers come, and we rest in that peaceful assurance as we would rest if the requests had been fulfilled.

“There are mysteries about this matter of prayer which no human mind can unravel.

How God, who is without variableness or shadow of turning, whose determinations are fixed and immutable forever, can be prevailed with by prayer, is more than we can understand. But God does answer prayer, and this meeting has abundant proof of it in the many answers which are given here. I as much believe, as I believe I am alive, that God is moved by the supplications of his people—that God is moved to do great things for them. It has been so in all ages, and it is so now, and we should be the most miserable of men if we could be made to believe that prayer would ever lose its power.”

THE VOICE OF MIGHTY PRAYER.

We sometimes hear the voice of mighty prayer. We know it when we feel it, but we know not how to describe it. We can say a great many things about it, but we cannot say *IT*. It cannot be put into words or into print. Yet the heart knows it, and can dis-

tinguish it from all other kinds of prayer—formal prayer, unfeeling prayer, weak prayer, and every other kind.

A striking illustration of this truth was once given by a clergyman of mature years, who said: "I heard such a prayer once when I did not love it. But I felt it was mighty and prevailing prayer. It was a time of general stupidity and unconcern on the subject of religion, as far as I knew, among all classes. I was then eleven years old, and I never could remember when my father and mother were unconcerned on the subject of the religious condition of their family or the families around them. My father was a man of much and mighty prayer. No one could hear him pray without being more or less impressed with the fact that he had very near access to the throne of grace. He was a man very intelligent in the old-fashioned theology respecting the great doctrines and duties of our holy religion as revealed in the Bible.

“I had been deeply awakened and led to the conviction of my sins. For two or three weeks I had been in a state of great religious anxiety. My distress was very intense. It sometimes seemed as if I could not endure it. And yet I was only a boy less than twelve years old. But few boys had been more thoroughly instructed than myself. I knew I was a sinner. I knew what I deserved as a sinner. I feared my punishment would overtake me, and my agony was increasing.

“One Sabbath my mother invited me to stay home with her from church. I was greatly surprised, for I could not remember when I had been permitted to stay away from public worship. But my mother was very earnest, and I remained.

“Soon after we were left alone she began to question me in regard to my state of mind. But I evaded answering, for I had kept all my feelings wrapt up in my own heart.

“‘Oh ! my son, my son !’ said my mother, with an agonizing cry, ‘you must not shut up

your heart to your poor mother. You have had a face of agony for weeks. I have read it all. I know you are concerned about your soul.'

"As soon as I found I was discovered, I revealed my anxiety to my dear mother, but only to find myself in more distress than ever.

"That night I was specially remembered at the family altar. I went to bed, but not to sleep. Sleep fled from my eyes. I lay tossing in agony till after midnight, and then I came down to the room where my parents were. I thought if my father would only pray for me I should find relief. I wanted relief, I must have it to live.

The first thing I did on getting into my father's room, was to tell him of my distress. I told him I thought I should be in hell before morning if he did not arise and pray earnestly for me.

"It was a cold night in January, and a bright bed of coals was lying on the hearth and giving light to everything in the room.

“My father arose quickly, and putting on a part of his clothing, lighted a candle and took up his Bible and read those few words in the ninth chapter of Romans, which speaks of the clay in the hand of the potter, of which he makes one vessel to honor and another to dishonor. He spoke of this as illustrating the sovereignty of God, who has mercy on whom he will have mercy, and whom he will he hardeneth. He was very solemn. He seemed to me to feel that my eternity of happiness or misery hung on the hour. He knelt down to pray. There was a tremulousness in his voice which for the moment touched me. He acknowledged that I was in the hands of God, as the clay was in the hand of the potter—that there he must leave me; that he could do nothing for me; it must be all of rich and infinite and sovereign grace if anything was done for me. But he begged that God would remember the covenant which he had made with his believing people, that he would be a God to them and

to their seed after them. He prayed that I might be made a vessel of honor for the Master's use.

“I was disappointed and displeased. I did not like the portion of Scripture my father had read. I considered it very ill-chosen and very discouraging to a sinner in such agony as I was. I wondered that my father had done no more *begging*. I thought he would plead earnestly for my immediate relief. He did not seem to me to have done it. I was greatly dissatisfied. I thought my father would just as soon I would be lost as saved. I had expected he would call upon God to love me ; with a loud voice would he call, as I thought. But had he done it? Was not I his oldest child, and the first among his children to express religious concern? Why was my father so quiet in his supplications? It is true, I heard his voice tremble with his deep emotion. I knew he was full of feeling. I went to my bed, but not to sleep.

“I lay very much agitated with conflicting emotions. I thought over the portion of Scripture read. How true it was that I was as clay in the hands of the potter. I was there, and I could not help myself. God could and would do all His pleasure in regard to me. He was sovereign in His justice, but He was sovereign, too, in His mercy.

“After a time I began to think of my father’s prayer. What a beautiful prayer it was, said I to myself. What could he do better than commend me to the mercy and grace of God in Jesus Christ. I was touched, too, when I remembered the deep feeling which was manifested in that trembling voice. ‘Oh! that beautiful prayer!’ said I to myself; ‘what could father do better than to acknowledge he could do nothing for me, and commend me to God to make his first-born child a vessel of honor, fitted for the use of the Master.’

“Now if that was so good a prayer for father to make, it is a good prayer for me to

make ; and, soon as thought, I bounded out of bed and on my knees on the cold floor. I was confessing to God what an undone wretch I was by reason of sin, and how I deserved nothing at His hands but punishment. Yet He could remit the punishment for the sake of what Christ had done, and make me a vessel of honor, to the praise and glory of His grace. He *could* do it, He *could* do it, and He would.

“What a flood of joy and gratitude and love came into my soul to think that He COULD do it. No language can describe my emotions of joy and love.

“How long I was on my knees I never knew. I forgot everything in the new life which was springing up within. I seemed to be floating on an ocean of delight.

“The next morning all was changed. All things seemed to be praising God, and my heart was full of praise. My mother read the change in my face. She sought the first opportunity aside to ask me how I felt. ‘Oh !

my dear mother,' throwing my arms around her neck, 'unspeakably happy!'

"My mother burst into low and suppressed sobs, and pressed me fondly to her bosom. Her heart was too full for words.

"When breakfast was over we sat back for reading the Bible and family prayer. As my father took up the Bible I said, 'Father, please read the beautiful chapter out of which you read to me last night.' He said ·

"'Do you love that chapter, my son?'

"'Oh! how I love it. I love to be in the hands of God. I want to get clear into his hands, to hide in the hollow of his hand.' I spoke with an enthusiasm I could not repress. I shall never forget the prayer of that morning.

"Sixty years have rolled away. I have been a minister of the Gospel for forty-five years. I have added hundreds and hundreds to the church over which I have been pastor. No case affects my heart so as the case of the religiously anxious little boy, such as was

mentioned just now. I can never hear such requests read here, coming from children asking us to pray that they may be converted, without feeling an irrepressible desire to pour out my heart in prayer to God for them. I am carried back at once to the hour when I obtained mercy."

TELL THE LORD SO.

"On a cold winter night," so said one, "little fire in the grate, little food, scanty furniture, mills all stopped, famine telling on the faces of the people, a few were gathered for prayer. They knelt; and one after another had some petition to make or blessing to thank God for. One poor fellow, whose face betrayed the deepest interest, knelt down and attempted to pray; but the sound of his own voice frightened him. He turned to one kneeling beside him, and said, in a whisper, 'I have no words.' His neighbor whispered back to him, 'Tell the Lord so.'"

“The stammering tongue went on and soon found words in which to pour out his heart to God. There was real, living prayer. He prayed for courage to pray, for pardon of all his sins, and for relief for all their distresses. Say, have you sins to confess? Tell the Lord so! Do you need help against temptation? Do you seek to know how you may come to Jesus? Tell the Lord so! Do you, fathers and mothers, desire the conversion and salvation of your children? Tell the Lord so! The fathers and mothers, the brothers and sisters, asking for prayers of this meeting, tell the Lord all about all your desires, as you would tell your dearest friend. Tell Him all.”

TELL JESUS.

Said a speaker: “I have been reading a little volume entitled ‘Tell Jesus.’ It was lent to me by the missionary of the old church—Mr. Lanphier; and the same was lent to

him by an old friend, a lady from California. The book is a little volume of something over one hundred pages. I jumped into a railroad car for an hour's ride into the country, and opened the book. I was greatly edified and instructed, as I went with absorbing interest through the pages of this little volume. I read the experience of one who made it her daily business to tell Jesus, with a loving, trusting spirit, all her wants, with assurance that he would attend to them all, even the very least, and supply them out of his infinite fulness.

“Toward the close of my journey, I said to my seat companion, who was looking at the title of my little book: ‘I have learned very much from these pages how my daily wants and cares may be shared by one who never withholds his sympathy from me. You see I am an old man—an old clergyman. I have lost half my life and half my usefulness by not preaching or believing half the Gospel—simply because I did not understand it.’

“ ‘What did you not understand?’ inquired my fellow-traveller.

“ ‘I did not understand how much I might receive from Christ, nor how much I might commit to him. I did not know much about this telling Jesus everything.’

“ ‘Oh, nonsense!’ said the man, as if a little impatient; ‘nonsense, to suppose that Christ can busy himself with the insect wants of such little creatures as we are. This book is fanatical; as much of the belief of the religious world is now-a-days. It is pitiful to see how everything is degraded by the whims of religious people. I tell you, sir, things are carried to great extremes. All this matter of faith and trust in Christ is well enough in the main; but when you come to making up a little budget of our little every-day wants and necessities for Christ to attend to, I do not believe a word of it.’

“ ‘Well, I do,’ said I, ‘believe every word of it; years ago I did not. I groped in darkness, stumbling at—I knew not what.

But my life is a constant joy to me now, because I believe that Christ is faithful when He says that all things shall work together for my good ; and He could not have said *all things*, unless His hand has the disposal of them. So I have faith when I ask of Him anything I want, in subjection to His wisdom and will, that He will bestow it upon me, if He sees it to be for my good. So whenever I want anything ever so small, I ask Him for it. All that He gives is a part of what He has purchased for me. If I am His, all things are mine, and I ask Him for what I want.'

" 'Did you ever know that He gave what you asked ?' he inquired.

" 'Yes, many a time — even to the food which I eat and the raiment I wear. The same I could say of many temporal mercies. But more especially could I speak of spiritual gifts.'

" 'How is that ?' said he. 'How do you know ?'

“ ‘I have asked him for the conversion of my friends, and they have been converted; and I dare not say it was not in answer to prayer.’ ”

“ ‘How do you know they were converted?’ he quickly rejoined.

“ ‘I know it by their holy living, and their triumphant dying,’ I answered.

“ ‘Then you have witnessed their dying?’ he inquired eagerly.

“ ‘Yes; I have seen them full of joy and gladness in the dying hour—as they were taking wing to soar away to their rest in the heavens. Theirs was a perfect triumph over death while dying. They died with smiles on their faces—in their joy at going to be with Jesus—saved in answer to prayer. They were near and dear to me—my own dear, precious sons, twenty-two and twenty-six years old. I have witnessed many others dying in the midst of the same triumphs, saved as they entered on the *vast forever* of happiness and glory, in answer to prayer. I

am happy to assure you that I believe Jesus loves to have us commit all our ways and wants to him. He guides our ways and satisfies our wants. I make it the rule of my every-day life to tell Jesus all.'

"He was silent awhile; and then added, with deep solemnity: 'I wish I could say as you say — that I commit all my ways and wants to Jesus.'

"'You may say, if you will believe on Christ, all I have said, and a thousand times more, when you have made full experience of his love,' I replied. 'And the more you tell Jesus, the more you will have to tell.'"

CHAPTER III.

REQUESTS FOR PRAYER.

FROM the beginning this has been a marked feature of the meeting. It is not uncommon for persons to rise in the assembly, and state cases in which they are particularly interested, closing with a request for the intercession of all who are present. But many who cannot attend personally, make known their desires by letter. These letters or notes are usually read at the opening of the exercises, and often give tone and color to all that follows. The papers themselves are secured in huge volumes, and together make a burden which even a strong man would find it hard to carry. It is estimated that about sixty thousand requests have been read before the meeting during the fourteen years of its existence.

These applications come from persons of all ages, and sexes, and conditions, and characters. They are from clergymen for the outpouring of the Holy Spirit upon their charges; from professing Christians who have given up their hope in Christ; from believers walking in darkness; from tried and tempted persons; from fathers and mothers; from brothers and sisters; from children; from awakened sinners; from the victims of degrading vice; from seamen; from missionaries; from Europe, Asia, Africa, and the Isles of the Sea.

On one occasion the leader called special attention to the following communication from

EIGHTEEN INDIAN CHIEFS,

it being a message from an Indian council, and coming through the medium of a female missionary: "The council—eighteen chiefs at Ho-ha-ha Wasa, or the Bright Eagle—says, Appeal to the pale faces to send us

missionaries. Write to the President, and God will bless you. Tell him to take away the military forces. Send missionaries, plant schools for our children, no matter where, distance is nothing to the Indian. The Santee Sioux are now holding the Indian Reservation, and are being civilized and Christianized, there being a mission school and church. The chief—Big Thunder—solicits your prayers for his people. The Rev. Mr. Hinman has the charge, and says that, out of a tribe of one thousand people, five hundred are communicants, comparatively as consistent as in a Christian land. How sad that a pagan race should go down to heathen graves, within an arm's length of our boasted Christianity!"

The Indian chief—Tonawantu—of the Oregon tribe, sends this message :

"Zula! para owaha volcamarama." Interpreted: "Pale face! pray for us, and God will bless you."

The leader said this request had very much

moved his heart, and he doubted not it would move the heart of every one who heard it. He had been called upon officially to visit the Indians last fall, and it was painful to see how they had been maltreated and abused—hunted like the partridge on the mountains. He hoped we would pray earnestly that a humane and Christian course might be pursued toward them by our Government, and all others.

Prayer after prayer followed, going up with earnestness for the poor Indians.

"IT IS DREADFUL."

There is surely no cause for surprise that many of these applications are distressing in the revelations they make. The statements of terror and despair are only what should naturally follow from a due sense of God's wrath against sin.

Who knows the anguish of a soul apprehensive that it is condemned to die the death

eternal? Such there are. The wonder is not they are *so many*. The wonder is they are *so few*. Most perishing men have no fears, and perish because they have not. Led on by Satan at his will, they go like the ox to the slaughter. Sin blinds the mind and hardens the conscience, and the poor sinner is lost ere he is aware that his feet are slipping on the very brink of the unfathomable abyss, ready to sink to rise no more.

"There are so many of these painful requests come here," said one, "that it is as much as a man's happiness is worth to come and hear them. I do not like it, and I sometimes think I will stay away. These melancholy requests will ruin the prayer-meeting. I wish they could be suppressed. It is dreadful!"

"What is dreadful?" said a man coming up, who had heard only a few words of what had been said.

"Why these requests for prayer which

push their way in here every day. They are so gloomy and despairing."

"What do you come here for?"

"Come here for? Why to pray and to enjoy *religion*, and be *happy*. These requests sometimes make me very unhappy, and take away all my spiritual comfort."

"But these people who are in distress about their souls are the very persons I love to hear from and pray for. Once I was as anxious and distressed as they are, and I know how to sympathize with them. Once I was led to see myself as sunk in the same horrible pit and miry clay, and I was led to cry out as they do—*pray for me*."

"Well, I tell you if reading so many of these requests is persisted in, I think you will break up the prayer-meeting."

"But do you not see, the more of these requests we have to read, the more we have to hear them read, and the more we have to pray for them. Do you not see that our meetings are more full of late, and that there

are awakened souls here every day? God pours down his Spirit, who convinces of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment to come; and this is the reason why there are so many miserable sinners here, and so many feeling that they are on the verge of ruin. I remember the time when I would have been, oh! so thankful, if any Christian would have prayed for me. We must pray for these souls in distress until God brings them out of it all. I love to hear the calls to prayer, and hope and pray that they may be greatly increased."

The substance of this dialogue took place in the portico of the church, some time before the hour for prayer. We happen to know that this is not the only man who has felt his mind disturbed and discomposed by the number and urgency of these requests for prayer.

But we have never yet heard the voice of one of them in the prayer-meeting, and we very much doubt whether they ever pray.

PAINFUL REQUESTS.

Such as the following, are some of the painful requests :

“Do pray for me. I am sick in body and mind. Pray earnestly for me, that I may become a Christian. I have been a member of the church seven years, but never had assurance that I am accepted.”

Another says : “Pray for my husband’s speedy conversion. He is the child of many prayers ; and yet he is wild and wayward, and scoffs at the religion of Jesus Christ. He had devoted Christian parents, who prayed much for him. My soul longs to see him a Christian, a true follower of Jesus. I have wrestled days and nights in prayer for him without any avail. And now I ask you to help me, a poor broken-hearted wife, to pray for a wayward husband’s speedy conversion.”

Another says : “Pray for me. I am with-

out hope and without God in the world, standing on the borders of eternal ruin."

Yet another: "I request your prayers on behalf of my soul. My mind has been enshrouded in gloom for months; and sometimes I feel as though I can hardly endure the agony of soul which overwhelms me. Will you not pray that Christ will enable me to look from myself to Him, that I may find a precious Saviour in time of need.

"AN ANXIOUS INQUIRER."

Oh yes, anxious one! we will pray for you. But trust in Jesus.

Surely it would not be in accordance with Christian duty or interest to shut one's heart against such calls. We are bound to weep with them that weep, and especially to sympathize with those who are in spiritual trouble. And the Lord, in his gracious providence, has listened to the intercessions of those who besought him for the sorrowing. Many a soul has been delivered in answer to

prayer. Many will praise God forevermore that they ever were remembered here before the throne of the heavenly grace. Many are the shining lights in the world which have been kindled at this altar of prayer. Many are occupying high positions in the church and in the world, of usefulness and influence, who, not many years ago, were the slaves of almost every form of sin, but who are now bright examples of Christian faithfulness and duty in the divine life.

FROM A MISSIONARY'S WIFE.

The following tender, touching appeal came from the land of Mohammedan delusion, and is supposed to have been penned by a missionary's wife, as it is in the handwriting of a lady :

“WESTERN ASIA, July 25, 1870.

“DEAR CHRISTIAN BRETHREN : Let me ask the prayers of the Fulton street Prayer-meeting for four brothers.

“They have been the subjects of many prayers. Beloved and pious parents, now in heaven, have prayed for them.

“Brothers and sisters, now faithful laborers for Christ, have prayed for them long and almost without ceasing.

“Devoted Christian wives have prayed and do pray for them.

“Yet, resting in their morality and taking refuge behind the faults of Christian business men, saying, ‘They are not as good as we,’ they do not see their need of Christ. They will not pray for themselves. Because they pray not for themselves I ask you to pray for them; ask that, for the glory of God, they may be converted, and see their need of just such a Saviour as is revealed in the Gospel, even Jesus Christ.

“One who labors for the extension of our Saviour’s kingdom in a foreign land, and earnestly bears the burden of these unconverted brothers on her heart, thus asks your

prayers, because I have heard that you have power with God."

Who, who will be unwilling to receive and respond to such an application from such a quarter?

The meeting was very much moved by the reading of this request. It called out very earnest prayer for these unconverted brothers. God grant the answer to united prayer in their behalf.

FROM A BOY.

"BROOKLYN, February, 1870.

"I am twelve years old. I have given my heart to my Saviour. To-night, I expect to give in my religious experience to the church. On Sunday, I expect to be baptized. I am young, and I will have many trials and temptations. Pray for me that I may be faithful, and never be afraid to speak of my love to my blessed Saviour.

"I request you to pray for my father. He

is not a member of any church. I am so anxious about him.

“I also request you to pray for my dear little sister. She loves Jesus, but is too young yet to join the church. ‘I love them that love me, and they that seek me early shall find me.’ ”

This letter is copied word for word as it was written. The handwriting is the neatest production of a boy, but the whole shows a remarkable intelligence.

CHAPTER IV.

ANSWERS TO PRAYER.

WHILE requests for prayer have multiplied to such an astonishing degree, it is a noticeable fact that so many cases have been reported to the meeting, in which God has graciously responded to the cry of his believing people and done just what they asked. These reports are estimated to exceed in number ten thousand.

A CLUSTER OF CASES.

A lady writes to the meeting, asking us to unite with her in offering thanksgiving to God for the answers to prayer bestowed in the conversion of her son. During the late war he was a soldier in the army. He came home the same moral, dutiful son as when he went away. But he was not a Christian.

On communion Sabbaths he would not go to church with his pious, praying mother, but would stay at home, and go on other occasions.

This mother had recourse to prayer, and asked this meeting to pray with her for the conversion of her son.

Lately she writes, saying, "Oh ! give thanks unto the Lord for hearing and answering prayer. My son sat by my side at the last communion, himself partaking of the emblems of the body and blood of Christ." She begs prayer that her son may be a growing and useful Christian.

A gentleman rises in the meeting and says, "Rejoice and give thanks to God with me as a hearer and answerer of prayer. Since I begged you to pray for my two sons, they have been converted. They have made public their confession of faith in Christ. Pray for them that they may walk worthy of their Christian profession."

Another mother writes of a son's conver-

sion in answer to prayer. Another, of a daughter who died at sixteen years of age, a dear believer in Jesus, whose conversion took place when she was in full health and strength, and had before her the prospect of many days. Then it was that she sent to this prayer-meeting, begging for prayer for this daughter's conversion; for she was gay and thoughtless and giddy.

All at once she was awakened to a sense of her sins, and fled for refuge to lay hold on the hope set before her in the Gospel. Little did she know that her hour had come. But so it was. As a thief the night messenger came; but her lamp was trimmed and burning, and she, a young believer in Jesus, went forth gladly to meet the Bridegroom. The mother writes with a grateful heart, calling upon the meeting to thank God for this unspeakable mercy—A CHILD FOREVER SAVED.

THE JEW'S STORY.

He said he had lately arrived in the city from Mexico. He was the bearer of documents of great importance to him as securing to him a large sum of money. But they by some means fell into the hands of a lawyer in this city, who refused to give them up. He sought to obtain them again and again, but without success or prospect of it. He was in a state of great distress, on account of this delay. The lawyer claimed that the Jew should pay him a certain amount of money before the papers could be given up, and he held on to them until payment should be made. This Jew had embraced Christianity about sixteen years ago.

He heard of the Fulton street Prayer-meeting, and of the many answers to prayer which were vouchsafed here. So he made his way to the meeting, intending to bring his case before it. When the meeting engaged in prayer, he, having said nothing

of his case, but bent on prayer, kneeled down in the pew where he sat, and presented his own case to Jesus, and asked Him to help in his present distress, for His own name's sake. He became so absorbed in prayer that he became oblivious to everything around him.

All at once he became impressed that his prayer was answered. He immediately arose from his knees and made his way out of the church and to the lawyer's office, and demanded his papers which were wrongfully detained from him.

"I cannot give them up," said the lawyer.

"You must give them up," said the Jew.

"No, I will not."

"I have been told you will give them up," said the Jew.

"Told I will give them up?"

"Yes," the Jew answered.

"When?" said the lawyer.

"This very morning."

"Where?"

“At the Fulton street Prayer-meeting.”

“Have you been to the Fulton street Prayer-meeting?”

“I have.”

“How came any one to speak to you about these papers? Did you speak to any one about them?”

“I did. In the meeting I got down on my knees, and told my Messiah, my Lord Jesus Christ, all about it.”

“And what did He say?”

“All at once as I was praying, asking Him to help me, I seemed to hear Him say, ‘Go at once to the lawyer, and you will get your papers.’ So I arose from my knees, fully persuaded that Jesus had answered my prayer; and here I am.”

Without another word the lawyer pulled the package from his pocket and handed the papers all over to me. I went at once to Washington and got my money.

“How did you feel?” said one to him, after the service was over.

The Jew replied :

"I felt just as certain of receiving my papers as if I had them in my hand. I had not a shadow of doubt about it when I left the church to go and get them."

"How did the lawyer seem to receive your application?"

"Well, I don't know. He simply looked abashed, and said if I had been to the Fulton street Prayer-meeting he supposed he must give up the papers."

"Then you really believe that the giving up the papers was in answer to prayer?" said the inquirer.

"To be sure I do. I had asked for them many times, but all in vain. The lawyer intended to extort money from me, but the Lord was too much for him. He moved him to do the righteous thing."

THE MISSIONARY PHYSICIAN.

A venerable Baptist clergyman arose in the meeting, saying he had a message to the praying people in behalf of the missions of the Reformed Church at Amoy, in China. An appeal is about to be made to the churches for aid; and one of the missionaries belonging to that mission, now here, is about to return, and wishes to take back with him a missionary physician. He wishes the man and the means. He spoke but a few words, but they were very earnest, as coming from a warm heart—a heart deeply moved with the importance of the subject. Then he led in prayer, very appropriate, very short—not more than two or three minutes—very earnest; and it seemed as if it must be answered.

The next day he took the floor at an early moment to say, “You know yesterday I brought China and the Amoy Mission before you, and I stated the object for which we

were asked to pray—for a missionary physician and help. I met that returning missionary within an hour after the meeting. ‘Here is a letter,’ said he, ‘and your prayer is answered. This letter says that the writer has a son just graduating from a medical college, whom he consecrates to the cause of missions in China. And a little more I have to tell you,’ said the missionary; ‘I had in this letter a bank-note for one hundred dollars to aid the work.’ Now,” said the old Baptist clergyman, “I was truly commissioned to present that request in behalf of that mission. I did not know that the missionary, about to make his appeal to the churches, was in the meeting. To my surprise I learned he was there, and sat unobserved, and heard all that occurred.

“Do you accept this as an answer to prayer? (appealing to the meeting.) Is this not sufficient to animate our faith and confidence in God? Does God answer prayer? Is this an answer? I accept it as such. I

believe God moved the heart of this father to give his son to the work.

On another occasion, the leader said, Four generations of my ancestors have worshipped in this old church, and you cannot think how dear this building is to me. And now I am here to ask you to offer up special thanksgiving for the answer to prayer for a person ready to die. She was given up by a council of physicians. Then I came to this meeting and asked you to pray for her life if it was God's will to spare her. She immediately began to mend, and now she is nearly recovered. I believe it is in answer to prayer.

THE BROTHER IN CALIFORNIA.

A young man arose in the Fulton street meeting, who was a stranger to us all. He said he was a clergyman, and had come nere bringing a thank-offering with him that God had heard and answered prayer in a remarkable manner.

He said he belonged to a family out of which a brother strayed away fifteen years ago, and they knew not where he was. They had not the least conception what had become of him—thought that he might have gone to California. The anxiety became agonizing to know what had become of him. They could think of nothing better than to pray for him, if yet alive, that he might come home again a new man in Christ Jesus. The agony became almost insupportable.

He came a long way to get to this meeting, and personally put in his earnest request for prayer; and he was remembered in very earnest supplication by the meeting again and again. It was evident to his mind that those prayers would be answered.

The family wrote to California. They even published it in the papers of San Francisco that they had made him a subject of special prayer in the Fulton street Prayer-meeting. The young man *was* living in San Francisco, but he saw nothing of this. His eye never

fell on the advertisement. He did not even know of the existence of the Fulton street Prayer-meeting. But the prayers of this meeting brought him back, for he is now home—a new man in Christ Jesus. Nothing but the grace of God in answer to prayer could have done it. I am here to-day to acknowledge that grace. I believe that God has done it, said the speaker, evidently deeply affected. Fifteen years away, made all the time a subject of earnest supplication. We learn that not a thing we did had the least influence in bringing him home. So God has done it all.

FROM CHURCHES.

A Baptist clergyman said: “A few days ago, a brother in the ministry stood there by yonder post, asking you to pray for the outpouring of the Holy Spirit upon his people. His pastoral charge is some distance from the city. Here is a letter from him, which I

hold in my hand. I know him well. He is an earnest minister of the Gospel. This letter speaks of a glorious work of grace begun among his people, which is now going forward with mighty power. About thirty have been converted, and many others are seeking the Saviour. Scarcely had he returned and begun his preaching services, before it was apparent that God was answering prayer, and the mysterious and wonderful work of the Spirit was already begun. The request was for continued prayer."

Here follows another :

"HOKENDAUGUA PARSONAGE, PENN.

"Join with us, dear brethren of the Fulton street Prayer-meeting, in humble and hearty thanksgiving unto God our Saviour and Quickener, for the blessed work commenced here in answer to your prayers and ours.

"J. A. LITTLE, Pastor Pres. Church."

This from Tennessee :

"In answer to your prayers, and those of a

few faithful Christians, we have had a gracious outpouring of the Holy Spirit, resulting in the conversion of fifty souls. This place contains about three hundred inhabitants. The whole community has been moved on the subject of religion. You have been requested to pray for us. Pray that we may be more abundantly blessed."

NOT AS EXPECTED.

A speaker said at the close of the meeting: "I want to state a case of answered prayer offered *here*, but answered so differently from what we expected. Much prayer was offered in our little church. It was for the Spirit to be poured out. It was poured out. But it was in the conversion of one of our young men that the answer was specially manifested. He came not to our meetings. Indeed he knew nothing of them. He was awakened and became anxious. He knew nothing of any special influence working on his mind, and

yet he had no peace till he was brought to believe in Jesus.

“He became a winged messenger of truth and prayer. Wherever he went revivals followed, and many sinners were converted. And we believe God raised him up in answer to prayer, to win many souls to Jesus; and though the special way in which we wanted the grace of God to be realized was not granted, yet in another way it was greater than we had dared to ask.”

SHOT AT THE DOOR.

The crowds that come to this old church, from day to day, are a wonder to many. And strangers passing by and seeing the multitude, often stop to see what is going on. And strange things happen to some, which the outside world know nothing of.

For example, a man stood back in the crowd near the door. He spoke with a loud, clear voice, and said: “This is the second

time that I have been in this meeting. The first time was five years ago. I had to crowd to get in. Shall I tell you about the five years' experience?

"I stood near the doorway. I never had been to the Fulton street Prayer-meeting before. I never have been here since. I got an arrow in my heart from the bow of the Almighty when I was here before; and I went away wounded, like a stricken deer. It was a wound which none but the Great Physician of the soul could heal. I carried it many days. It was very painful. I knew I was a guilty, perishing sinner. The cry of my soul every day was, 'Oh! that I knew where I might find Him of whom Moses and the prophets did write.' I went mourning many days. At length I met Him whom my soul loveth. He became mine, and I was His. I basked in the light of His countenance. I felt that my sins were all forgiven. I began a new life. These five years have been the happiest years of my life.

“I live far from here—hundreds of miles away. I have not had the second opportunity to come in here until to-day. The first time, I came to this meeting out of the merest idle curiosity. I could not have told the reason why I came.

“Now I am here to bring my thank-offering to God that His Holy Spirit ever led me to this place of prayer. I came, I have no doubt, in answer to the prayers of a dear, pious mother. It was to be God’s way of answering prayer, which had gone up for me ever since I was born. I came, also, in answer to your prayers.”

CHAPTER V.

INQUIRERS.

AN interesting fact in connection with the meeting is its agency in the conviction and conversion of persons, previously entirely without concern for their religious welfare. This result was not contemplated in its original institution. The object then chiefly in view was the comfort and establishment and growth of Christians. But, insensibly, another class has been drawn under the power of the truth. Many instances have occurred in which persons have been suddenly brought into an agony of feeling under a sense of sin, when there was nothing in the outward circumstances to produce it. The influence is quietly exerted, and the meeting knows noth-

ing of it, until, perhaps, the awakened person arises to disclose his altered views.

There are other cases in which persons, elsewhere aroused to concern for their souls, come to the meeting in the hope of hearing something which may be of benefit to them. In this way they elude observation, and avoid the necessity of unbosoming themselves to their friends. There is reason to suppose that very many have thus received aid and stimulus which at least enabled them to cease seeking the Saviour, as it were, in the dark, and to avow themselves as his decided followers.

In this view a speaker once applied the expression of Peter on the Mount of Transfiguration.

IT IS GOOD TO BE HERE.

“I hurried all the way from Harlem,” said one, “to get to this meeting; but one delay after another hindered, and I have had only

ten minutes of the meeting, but I have been well paid for coming. *It is good to be here*, even for a few minutes. Jesus is here. Many anxious sinners are here, seeking to know how they may be saved. Some find the Saviour here. It is out of darkness into light with some awakened, anxious souls. The Holy Spirit is poured out here."

Another said: "You will never know in this world how many have been converted in this meeting. I was in the army during the last war, and my business was to minister to men sick and wounded on the field and in the hospitals. I cannot begin to tell you how many men I heard ascribe, with their dying breath, their salvation to Christ, as first found in this Fulton street Prayer-meeting. OH, so MANY! This is the house of God—this is the gate of heaven to many perishing souls."

Sometimes persons manifest their interest in such a form that it attracts the attention of ministers and others who frequently attend the meeting, and an interview follows, in which

such instruction is given as the case requires
One such has been recorded under the title of

THE MINISTER, THE INQUIRER, AND THE DEVIL.

The meeting was over, and the great congregation was passing out. Three ladies—married sisters—stood near the door, and one of them seemed to invite attention as wishing to say something. These ladies were all in early life. Two of them were exceedingly anxious for the other. There she stood, as pale and solemn as one could look. Said one: "This sister of mine is in a very anxious state of mind; has been so for a long time. She longs to be a Christian, and wishes to be assured that she is one. But she is greatly tempted of the devil, who endeavors to persuade her she has committed the unpardonable sin."

At this moment the despairing one turned and lifted up her deep blue inquiring eyes to the face of the minister, with an imploring

look, as if she would have him give her some spiritual consolation.

Minister.—"Are you in any distress or spiritual trouble?"

Inquirer.—"I am very anxious to become a Christian."

Minister.—"What hinders?"

Inquirer.—"The devil."

Minister.—"He cannot hinder, unless you allow his suggestions. How does he hinder you?"

Inquirer.—"He stands here now, whispering in my ear, and says—"

Minister.—"What does he say?"

Inquirer.—"He says, 'You will get some very poor advice here. These people do not know you as well as I do. They will tell you to seek pardon. I tell you it is of no use. You have committed the unpardonable sin. You cannot be forgiven.'"

Minister.—"What do you say to him?"

Inquirer.—"I answer, 'True enough. I think I have.'"

Minister.—"Did you ever hear that the devil is a liar from the beginning?"

Inquirer.—"I have heard so; but I think he tells the truth *this time*. He says I am one of the greatest sinners that ever lived, and I think I am. Oh! sir, you cannot think how firmly I am bound in his slavish chains. It is dreadful."

Minister.—"Do you not know there is One who can break the chains of Satan and let your soul free?"

Inquirer.—"I believe Jesus can. But I want Him to do it and to ASSURE me of it. I want *special evidence* of it; but I do not get it, and I suppose I never shall have it; and the devil says I NEVER SHALL. He has me fast—*fast*. It is an awful bondage."

Minister.—"It has come to this: You must believe Christ or the devil. Now, which of the two will you believe? You do believe the devil, and you do not believe Jesus; and there is one thing more to be said: your own unbelieving heart has more to do in this case

than the devil, and you lay more on him than belongs to him."

Inquirer.—"Do you think so?"

Minister.—"I am sure of it; and if you can believe it, the spell which is on you will be broken."

Inquirer.—"I had not dreamed that my unbelieving heart was the devil. But I think it may be even so."

Minister.—"It is no doubt so. Now can you go to Jesus just as you are, and cast yourself on Him just as you are? and as to assurance, let Him do as He pleases about giving it to you, and give you more or less, according to His good pleasure. He knows what is best for you. He has promised to never cast you out, and His promises never fail. You can trust Him for all, for He has promised you all. Call upon Him and He will hear you, and deliver you out of all your troubles. He has done it for others *always*, and He will *always* do it for you. As for the devil, resist him and he will flee from you;

as for having committed the unpardonable sin, no man has ever committed it who has a longing desire, as you have, to come to Christ, and be assured of acceptance. It is impossible; for it is the Holy Spirit who enlightens your mind into a knowledge of Christ and makes you feel your need of Him."

A STRANGE CONFESSION.

The following was read, and it was believed the writer was present in the meeting :

"CHRISTIAN FRIENDS : Oh ! pray very earnestly for the conversion of a poor, miserable sinner, that he may have strength enough to forsake the ways of infidelity, which he professes, *but does not believe*, and that he may humbly bow to worship the *Jesus* whom he *affects to despise*, but in *reality fears*. Oh ! pray that the love of Christ may constrain him."

This, said a speaker, is strange, that a man

should ask prayer that he may become obedient to the faith of One whom he professes to despise, but yet fears. Good reason has such a man for his fears. "Behold, ye despisers, and wonder and perish!" will be pronounced against him, if he does not soon become reconciled to God through Jesus Christ. Such a man needs a Saviour, and must have one right away. It is awful for a man to openly, and with a loud tongue, despise the crucified One. It is no mark of courage to profess his contempt of Christ. It is no trait of manhood. It is a mean, contemptible spirit to jeer at Christianity. Yet, I hear this jeering on every side. At heart, the men and women who jeer know better. They know religion is true.

"PRAY FOR ME."

It was some time after the services had commenced that a woman, advancing up the middle aisle to the table in front of the lead-

er, laid a note on the Bible. The chairman of the meeting did not observe the movement, his attention being drawn in another direction, while the woman had dropped into a seat.

A gentleman arose and requested the leader to read the note before him. This was all: "*Pray for me.*" She did not go into any explanation of her case. She was a woman in middle and humble life, judging from her appearance. Yet, she was some one who felt the need of prayer, and felt that there was power in prayer to prevail with God. She must have had hope that prayer offered for her now, and in this place, must be effectual.

The prayer which followed was exceedingly appropriate and tender. It took for granted that the great want of her soul was a saving faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. It was an earnest pleading with God that He would grant this poor woman the sweet and happy experience of His great salvation.

The woman bowed her head upon the pew

before her ; and who can tell the emotions of her soul while that earnest prayer was being offered for her personal good ?

“ Did you see that woman lay the note on the table ? ” said a clergyman to the writer. He was one of the veteran preachers of the city. I said, “ Yes, I did see it. ”

“ Well, that little act touched me very much. There was a heart yearning after something — she did not tell what, but we can guess. There must have been some pressing need. ”

CHAPTER VI

TRIUMPHS OF GRACE.

ALL conversions are fruits of the grace of God, but in some cases this feature stands out more prominently than it does in others. Naturally, many such were mentioned from time to time in the progress of the meeting. Some of these were reported, and are here subjoined.

IN THE PINES.

A young man arose and said, "Will you hear me tell you what the Lord is doing among the pines and barrens of New Jersey? Three years ago, I could not read nor write. Now, I can do both as well as most men. Three years ago I was awakened to a sense of my awful condition as a sinner, and was led to fly to Christ as able to save even *me*,

for I had been a great sinner. I at once felt a great desire to lead others to Jesus. I felt I must learn to read God's holy Word, and fill my mind and heart with the knowledge and love of Jesus, so that I might win souls to him. I had been a sailor. But now, my great desire is to preach Jesus. I am laboring among the men of the New Jersey pines. And oh ! how the Lord blesses my poor efforts to win souls. I—such a wretched sinner as I was—to be made the means of salvation to others. I am melted and overcome by the thought of such grace and mercy.

“ We are holding meetings every night, and many, even the stoutest-hearted, are turning to the Lord. Let me give you an example :

“ I noticed a young man at our meetings whose face bore the marks of a sinful life. I felt a great desire to speak to him. He was a stranger, and I inquired who he was. I spoke to a friend of my desire to speak to him about his soul. That friend said :

“ ‘Why, he is a most desperate character—a free-lover, an infidel, and everything else that is bad. You *must not* speak to him. It is of no use. Besides, he will abuse you, and may do you harm. Let him alone.’

“So I let him alone. But I did not feel easy. I felt as if I *must* speak to him. I sought him and found him, and told him what Jesus had done for me, and what he was willing to do for him. As best I could, I set before him Jesus, and him crucified.

“He abused me very much, and I went away sorrowful, resolved that I would earnestly pray for him—steeped in sin as he was—that he might be converted. I was in dead earnest. It was but a little while before the young man came to me, apologized for his abuse of me, and said, ‘Now, my dear sir, will you pray for me! I am the chief of sinners.’

“I did pray with him and for him, and he came at once to the foot of the cross, and began earnestly to pray for himself, and now he

is a shining Christian—forsaking all his evil ways, and casting himself on Christ just as he was.

THE CONVICT RECLAIMED.

As soon as the previous speaker had concluded, up sprang a Presbyterian minister, who said, with great emphasis, “Brethren, do we believe this testimony—testimony to the faithfulness of our God to his own gracious promises? Do we believe Him when he says, ‘Open thy mouth wide and I will fill it?’ Are we not a little afraid we shall ask too much, and so we distrust our Heavenly Father? Here is a man of the sea who became obedient to the Gospel of Christ; only three years ago could neither read nor write—has educated himself, and now is laboring to build up the kingdom of Christ, which he once endeavored to destroy. I thank this dear brother for this testimony. From the bottom of my heart I thank him. It stirs within me new resolutions. We know not

how much we can do for Christ until we *trust* God, as well as *pray*. I once had the trial of it. I once was called to visit a youth, by his widowed, pious mother, who could do nothing with him—nothing. Neither could I. I endeavored to talk with him, but could not. He was a mere boy, but dreadfully hardened. At length he got into State prison. God laid his soul on me as I never had it before. I went to Sing Sing to see him. But it was unavailing. At length, after a year, he came home.

“One day I went to see him, with the heavy burden of his soul on my heart. It was the salvation of his perishing soul. I went determined to pray with him, and when I met him I told him so.

“‘Go away!—go away!’ said he, ‘and attend to your own business, and let me alone.’

“‘No, no!’ said I, solemnly and coolly, ‘I am going to pray with you.’ And I began to pray. I poured out the great burden of my heart to God. I believe God heard my

prayer on the spot, for in that very hour this youth was convinced and humbled under a sense of sin, and asked me to pray for him ; and at length he came out of darkness into God's marvellous light."

"NO GOD TO PRAY TO."

A gentleman arose in the meeting who said he had never been here before. But, though a stranger, he wished to relate the remarkable conversion of an infidel.

The clergyman of the place was specially gifted with faith in God, and was a man of prayer. The infidel went to hear one of his evening lectures, at the close of which he gave out the notice that if there was any one who wished to talk with him on the subject of religion, he was requested to tarry. So, after the meeting was concluded, the infidel approached and said :

"If I understood you aright, you invited

any one to remain who wished to converse on the subject of Christianity."

"Yes," said the clergyman, "I am always glad to converse with any one on the subject of religion."

"Well, then, let us appoint a time and place."

So place and time were appointed. When they met at the place and time, the clergyman said he never entered upon a conference of this kind without prayer. So he invited the infidel to kneel down with him, and they would pray together. This did not suit the unbeliever. "No, no! I object," said the infidel, "we did not come here to pray. We came here to discuss the subject of religion. Now I proceed to the matter in hand."

"I cannot proceed till we have had a season of prayer. I never can discuss the subject of religion till I come to God, the author of it, and beg His enlightening and teaching Spirit to lead my mind into all truth. So now kneel down with me, and we

will pray together. I have a God to go to in prayer."

And, after much persuasion, the infidel kneeled with the clergyman, who kneeled close beside him, so that his elbow touched the arm of the poor unbelieving sinner beside him, and the prayer which was poured forth was a very fervent one. When it was finished, the clergyman said to the infidel :

"Now do you pray to your God."

"No, no! I cannot pray. I have *no God to pray to*—NO GOD TO PRAY TO." He arose, in great agitation, and left the place.

In the evening he was present at the prayer-meeting; and when permission was given for all who desired to be prayed for to manifest it by rising, he was instantly up for prayer. He wanted a God to pray to. He felt that there was a vast difference whether a man had a God to pray to or not. In a short time the scoffing unbeliever became an humble Christian.

OUT. OF DARKNESS INTO LIGHT.

Some time since, a merchant of New York City, whose residence was across the Hudson, and who bore an honorable Dutch name and maintained an unsullied reputation, was in great distress. You might have seen him striding up and down in his parlor at a late hour, his mind in a whirlwind of commotion. What is the matter? He has been hit by an arrow from the quiver of the Holy Spirit. It has pierced "between the joints of the harness," and entered deep into his soul. He has been a moral man, well taught in the great truths of the Bible, and a regular attendant upon the sanctuary every Sabbath. This is Sabbath night, and the morning is coming; but alas, he sees no morning coming to him. He is in the deepest darkness—not darkness merely, but agony, and such agony as he thinks none but himself has ever felt.

Poor man! The struggle in his bosom is

awful. Up and down, for hours, he paces the parlor. It is not nervousness—not disease. It is something worse than either. The man has awakened from the slumber of a lifetime to find himself an awful sinner, standing on the brink of destruction! “What can I do?” he says to himself. “What shall I do? I can’t endure this agony long: a wounded spirit who can bear? How shall I find relief? If sin is such a terror to me here, what must it be when the light of eternity comes upon me? What a fool I have been, to sell my soul for a pin, a feather, a straw, in my vain pursuit of this world!”

The Holy Spirit was shedding down a shower of grace upon the church where he had been that day. The man thought he had never heard his minister preach so before, nor Christians pray as they did in the evening meeting. He felt that he was meant in the preaching and the prayers. Darkness and distress settled more and more deeply on

his soul. To use his own words, his "convictions were terrific."

It was past midnight when, under the gas-light, he stood with a little book in his hand, "*Out of Darkness into Light*," published by the Board of Publication of the Reformed Church; and he opened it at the chapter of which the heads are, "*What to believe*," "*How to believe*," "*When to believe*." His attention became wholly absorbed in the wonderful truth set before him, that a poor sinner might believe and be saved. As he read and re-read *what* the sinner must believe, Jesus was set fully before him with his precious promises. Over and over he read *how* to believe, until his whole soul was aglow with—not the possibilities, but the certainties which were before him. His mind drank in the truth, as one perishing from thirst drinks water. As he next read *when* to believe, and the duty of instantly believing was set before him, so that his mind grasped all that it meant, in a moment he was upon his knees, pouring out his

thanksgivings to Jesus. "O Jesus!" he exclaimed, with a holy rapture in his soul, "O Jesus! my Lord, and my God! I give my all up to Thee, body and soul, for time and eternity. Dear Jesus, Thou shalt be forever the treasure and the joy of my heart. My life shall be one continued anthem of praise to Thee."

How long he was upon his knees that man never knew. But when he met his family the next morning, the rapture that was in his heart was beaming out on his face, and he was swift to tell what a precious Saviour he had found. His heart had joined "*the everlasting song.*" It was "out of darkness into light."

That little book, the title of which stands at the head of this article, cost but a little money to publish, a couple of hundred dollars, it may be; but it has been the means of the conversion, probably, of hundreds. How little to give for a man of wealth, to bring out other just such volumes which, by

the blessing of God, may be the means of the conversion of just such men as this now Christian merchant. What a consolation to feel, when this life is closing, that we have not lived in vain, but have been instrumental in bringing some souls out of nature's darkness into God's marvellous light.

CHAPTER VII.

DANGEROUS DELAYS.

It is generally conceded that the most common cause of the ruin of the soul is the habit of postponing attention to serious things. Several sad illustrations of this fact have been reported, a very few of which are here given.

WHERE SHALL I FIND HIM ?

He was a noble specimen of a man. His figure was commanding. His expressive, intelligent eye and broad forehead marked him as one gifted with intellect, and a smile of rare beauty lighted up all his face, and attracted kindly glances wherever he went.

His parents had died when he was quite young, leaving him considerable property, which had not, however, paralyzed his ener-

gies, for his record as a scholar was a brilliant one; and now he had entered upon a successful career as a lawyer.

With all his other attainments, he was a fine musician; and in the choir, where various instruments were used as an accompaniment to the voice, he played the flute with great skill. He was always punctual at church, drawn there, as it seemed, by his love for music, as the preaching evidently failed to interest him. He spent his time during this part of the service in turning over the leaves of anthem and chant, and when the last sentence was uttered he always seemed relieved.

But now there came a Sabbath when the tall, handsome figure entered not the village choir, and the dulcet notes of the flute were silent. To the inquiry as to the cause of the absence of one always so punctual at church, the answer was given that he had been stricken with a fever.

Before another Sabbath dawned, it was whispered that the young lawyer was danger-

ously ill ; then, that there was no hope, and that he had asked anxiously for the clergyman whose ministrations had been wont to weary him. Quickly the man of God obeyed the summons, and hastened to his side, but, alas ! only to find him fast nearing that mystic river over which, sooner or later, we all must pass. Agonizingly he pressed the minister's hand, and said, with anguish in his tones, "I fear you are too late. I am going—where—oh *where !*"

"Look to Jesus," said the clergyman.
"Look to Jesus."

"But where shall I find him?—oh, where shall I find him?" asked the dying man ; and instantly his spirit was gone, into eternity.

The next was a solemn Sabbath indeed, when, with that vacant seat before us, and those flute-notes hushed forever, the choir sang, with trembling voices, the solemn words—

"There is a death whose pang
Outlasts the fleeting breath.
Oh, what eternal horrors hang
Around the second death !"

NOT TO-DAY.

A gentleman arose and said : "I am come from the scenes of a great and glorious revival—from the place where Jonathan Edwards lived, and labored, and preached those great sermons which led such multitudes to cry out, 'What must we do to be saved?' A young man, the other day, was urged to begin at once a religious life. '*Not to-day*,' he said; and in less than one week we followed him in long procession to his grave. He died without hope, and without God. His '*Not to-day*' was an awful decision—it was *never*."

"I CANNOT DIE ALL UNPREPARED."

The respected chaplain of the City Hospital related the case of a man who was brought in and laid upon a bed, when the physician of the hospital was called to attend to his case. As the examination proceeded, the poor young man, with great eagerness,

watched the expression of the doctor's face and when he said that he was doomed to die, he cried out: "Oh, doctor, can't you save me? I cannot die. I must not die. I am not prepared to die. I have failed to get ready. Oh, I cannot die!"

The doctor told him that it would be impossible to save him; and there, amidst his pleadings to be saved, this poor, unprepared young man was found sinking into the arms of death, who came with unrelenting step to drag him into eternity. Death does not wait on his victims. Life is the time to prepare for death.

THE TWO FRIENDS.

"A number of years ago," said a speaker, "there was a season of deep religious interest in the Greene street Methodist Church. On a certain evening two young men, who worked in the same factory, were sitting side by side in the gallery, when an invitation was

given to all who felt disposed to seek the salvation of their souls, to come forward and be made the subjects of special prayer. The two friends earnestly debated between themselves whether they should accept the invitation. Finally, one declared that his mind was made up, and he would certainly begin at once to seek the Lord's grace; and he entreated his companion to go with him, but in vain. The answer was, 'Yes, I will surely become a Christian, but not now—not to-night. I will wait awhile.' So the other went alone, and the Lord was gracious to him so that he believed and became the happy possessor of a bright Christian hope.

"A very few days afterwards there was an explosion in the factory where they worked, and a score or more of persons were killed or dreadfully injured. Among the former was the new Christian, who was able to utter only two words before his lips closed forever in death. These words were, 'Blessed Jesus!'" and thus was sufficiently indicated the sus-

taining power of his faith, even in such a sudden and tremendous shock. His friend was also killed, but instantly, and without time to utter a word. To all appearance his soul was lost. His purposes were all fair enough, his convictions were clear, his mind was satisfied; all that was needed was an actual acceptance of Christ's offered mercy. This he postponed, thinking that there was plenty of time before him. The result showed that there was but a step between him and death. He had thrown away his last opportunity. When the two friends parted in the church—the one to go forward to the place of prayer, the other to leave the house—they parted forever."

A LAYMAN'S APPEAL.

A lawyer arose, and with uncommon unction, addressed a few words to the meeting. He spoke of the importance of seeking out the wretched and the lost, and endeavoring to bring them to Christ. Time is rushing on,

life is passing away, and life's work will soon be done. He urged men to go into our prisons and almshouses and hospitals, and seek out the lost and the perishing, and endeavor to do them good, and strive to snatch them as brands from the devouring fire. He spoke with great tenderness in his words and manner. His heart was moved.

"I have just come from the hospital," said he, "where I saw a dying girl, just in her early youth, going away with no hope and no God, and no bright heaven before her. As she saw me coming to speak to her, she said, 'Don't speak to me. I am dying. I cannot bear it—not one word.' The light of her life was going out in everlasting darkness."

Then the lawyer broke out in a melting, earnest prayer that we might make life earnest by working earnestly for God and for his glory, in the salvation of souls. He prayed that we might love Jesus so, that his song should be always on our tongues, and his love in our hearts, and that we might be ready at

all times to recommend him to others. He prayed for more vital godliness—more of the spirit of the Master, who was never weary of doing good. Also for the poor, the wretched, and the perishing in this great city—going down to the gates of everlasting death. “Oh! Lord Jesus,” said he, in tones which went to every heart, “let it not be that thou hast died in vain, as regards the thousands on thousands in this city who have none to care for their souls. Oh! raise up helpers who shall not fail in their duty, nor leave these to go to destruction, ignorant of Thee, O thou blessed and loving Saviour—ready to receive and save the vilest sinner.”

The meeting was solemn, and deeply moved by the tenderness of his prayer.

CHAPTER VIII.

PARENTS AND CHILDREN.

RARELY does a meeting pass without an allusion, at least, to one or other of these classes.

“OH! MOTHERS! MOTHERS!”

So began one his earnest testimony to the usefulness of mothers' prayers. A few requests had been read from mothers for prayer for the conversion of their children, when up sprang a young man in the back part of the room with these words as his mode of beginning his address: “Oh! mothers! mothers! you who have unconverted children, you do not know the power of a mother's prayers over a wayward child. I was such a one. I left my home on some slight provocation, as I thought. I came to this city. I became

an actor upon the stage, and pursued it as a profession. But a mother's prayers and entreaties followed me.

"I became convinced of sin, and as I hope converted, and last Sabbath I spent in the Tombs, endeavoring to do good to those who are shut up there. I have now resolved to lead a different life, and to devote myself to the service of God."

The young man spoke with great modesty and deep feeling, and earnestly exhorted mothers never to cease praying for their unconverted sons, for God would surely hear a mother's prayers.

As he sat down, up sprang the leader of the meeting, and said he wanted to add his testimony to the value of a mother's prayers. His mother had ten children. Among his earliest recollections were those of that dear mother, who gathered her children around her in a little circle, with herself in the middle of it, *every day for PRAYER*. He should never forget those praying seasons. They were

stamped indelibly on his memory. That mother lived to see all her children converted, and all become useful members of the church.

A MOTHER'S ANXIOUS HEART.

A Methodist lady wrote to ask the meeting to pray for her oldest living son, that he might be converted before his next birth-day, which would complete his fourteenth year. She then proceeded to say :

“My first-born—of twenty-three years—died from an accident. I had little or no hope in his death. I consecrated him to God early. I am praying and believing for my two younger sons. I am praying day and night for the conversion of my boy, under the impression if he is not converted while young, he will grow up a wicked man. I am very much in earnest, for it seems to me to be a case of life and death—*eternal life or eternal death*. I hope you will add your

own prayers to mine, and I will believe with all my heart that God will graciously answer for his dear Son's sake."

This request was taken up in prayer with great earnestness, at the same time leaving it to God to answer in his own time and way. His promises are sure. The writer of the letter expresses some fear that she limits the mercy of God in specifying any time "before which" she wishes her son to be converted. "Yes," said the leader, "she and we have nothing to do with the time or the way. All we have to do is with *now*—pray for his conversion *now*, believe *now*. There is no yesterday nor to-morrow with God. It is all one eternal NOW with him. So it is with his promises. *Now* is the accepted time. Behold, *now* is the day of salvation. To-day is the day of salvation with God. Let us pray for to-day and believe for to-day, and in God's own time and way this earnest praying mother shall see the desire of her heart realized in the conversion of her son."

A SERMON TO SABBATH-SCHOOL TEACHERS.

An elderly clergyman said: "As this is Saturday, and a very full meeting, it is fair to conclude that there are a good many Sabbath-school teachers present, both from the presence of these young people, and from many of the requests for prayer which have been read, which ask us to pray for the conversion of Sabbath-school classes.

"It was Pharaoh's daughter who said to the mother of Moses: 'Take this child and train it for me, and I will give thee thy wages.'

"So the Lord Jesus says to every teacher of children in a Sabbath-school.

"Now I want to preach to you a five-minutes' sermon from this text—'Take this child and train it for me, and I will pay thee thy wages.' Let us consider—

"1. THE WORK APPOINTED.—It is the religious instruction of children. You might

be discouraged if you were required to endeavor to win old sinners to Christ. You might well say, 'I can never do it.' Perhaps you never could. It might be a very unthankful task to attempt to influence one of these old gray-headed unbelievers. You probably would not succeed. But not so with children. If your heart is interested in them, how quick they are to know it. How joyfully they appreciate it. How plastic their young minds are. How easily they are influenced. How readily they may be made to understand the great requirements and promises of the gospel.

"I have been a Sabbath-school teacher from a very early period of my life, besides my labors in the ministry. If I had my life to live over again, I would begin just as I did before—with the children. It is, comparatively, an easy thing to lead them to Christ. I would endeavor to win them to Jesus in the young morning of their lives. I think I have had some success in this work. I pity

the pastor who does not use this power and persuasion.

“2. TRAIN THEM FOR ME.—It is work for the Master. It was Jesus who said ‘of such is the kingdom of heaven.’ What a blessed work it is to win these young immortal souls into the Redeemer’s kingdom! This is exalted labor. Christ shall see, in the conversion of these children, the fruit of his soul’s *travail*. His life shall not be poured out upon the cross in vain. Think of the great Sunday-school army! What multitudes of it have already gained the shining shore, ‘safe in the promised land!’ How Jesus gathers the lambs in His bosom! ‘Am I training these for Jesus?’ you may well ask yourselves. Blessed work? Work on — work ever.

“3. THE REWARD.—‘I will pay thee thy wages.’ What a reward awaits the faithful Sunday-school teacher! I knew a teacher who had a class of girls. He was an eminent physician. These girls were all just budding

into womanhood. This teacher all at once became exceedingly anxious for the salvation of every one. He prayed and labored for this glorious consummation. No physician ever labored and watched more zealously for the recovery of his patients than did this teacher for those souls. They were all hopefully converted, and all were received into the church on the same day, and witnessed a good confession of their faith in Christ as the author and giver of their spiritual life.

“It soon became apparent why this good physician was in a hurry to see his work consummated in the conversion of all his class—for soon he sickened and died. Many of his class have gone home to glory; only a few remain. He has received his wages. What a blessed reward has been his. I can imagine something of the welcome which he had into heaven. I can imagine how the angels met him, and flew with him up to the realms of glory. I can imagine how Jesus met him with a crown set with stars for his crown of re-

joicing, and, placing it upon his head, said :
' Well done ! good and faithful servant.'

" Oh ! fellow teachers, the reward is coming. It may only be a little way before some of you. Let us be faithful unto death, for so we shall win a crown of life."

THREE BLOWS.

" A gentleman had three beautiful lovely little daughters. They were the idols of their father's heart. He was not a Christian. The little girls had learned to love Jesus, and they often prayed together for their father.

" One of this dear little band was taken sick with a disease which was unto death. She went rapidly down to the bank of the cold river of death. When dying, she called her father to her and said, ' Dear father, I am about stepping into the river, and I shall soon be on the shining shore. I am going to see Jesus very soon. I want you to promise

to meet me in heaven. Promise me, father,' said the beseeching young girl.

"But the father would not promise, and she went down to death without it. At length a second girl came down with disease, and sunk rapidly toward the grave. When she found she was going, she called her father to her bedside, and said she was going soon to join her sister in heaven. She asked him if he would meet her in heaven. Still the hard heart of the father vouchsafed no assurance to cheer the heart of the little daughter, and she went on her journey through the dark valley and shadow of death without it.

"Then the third and only remaining daughter sickened, and her case soon became hopeless. She had seen how her sisters had died, fearing no evil as they stepped into the dark shadow. So she approached the dark valley with the same assurance that Jesus would be with her, and His rod and His staff should comfort her. Feeling herself to be going, she also called her father to her, and, stretching

out her little hand and grasping his, she said: 'Father, I am going to see my little sisters, who have gone to Jesus in heaven. You believe they are now with Him in heaven. I shall soon be there, too, and we three shall be together and we shall join the everlasting song. Now, dear, dear father, will you promise me, before I go, that you will meet us all in heaven?' The heart of the father broke down, and he answered, 'I will—I will.' And with a smile on her face, the little girl departed into the unseen world, and winged her joyful flight up to the gates of the celestial city. Three dreadful blows had to be struck before that stout heart would yield, but now he gives evidence that he has experienced the great change.

"So God carries on and accomplishes the victories of His grace. So all over the great West, God is bringing sinners to repentance."

A LITTLE GIRL'S EXPERIENCE.

Her brother spoke of her as having, within a few days, given most indubitable evidence that she had become a dear and earnest Christian. She is only eight years old. She had deep convictions that she was a sinner, and needed an interest in Christ's saving mercy. She at length found Him in whom her soul delighted. When asked how she felt when trusting in Jesus, "Why," said she, "I feel as I do toward my father when he lifts me over the muddy places. I *know* he will take me safely over. So Jesus will take me over the hard places."

This is a child's faith and trust in Jesus, and is well explained. Some may be here, having come quite up to the brink of the slough of despond. "How shall we get through it or over it?" some poor sinner says. Be of good cheer. Look to Jesus. He will lift you over.

"I WANT TO SEE THE QUEEN."

A gentleman was speaking of the mediation by which we get access to God, our heavenly Father. He said he would illustrate it by telling the story of a little boy in England. This little boy had heard in his Sabbath-school that the Queen of England dearly loved little children. As he thought of it from day to day, he became very desirous of seeing her. So one day he became so anxious that he said to his mother :

"I want to see the Queen."

"Why do you want to see the Queen?" asked the mother.

"Because I have heard that she loves little children."

"But you cannot see her. They will not allow it."

"But, mother, I *must* see her. Do let me *try* to see her."

This was a poor little boy. He was the son of a poor mother who had no friends of

influence. But the little boy was so importunate that she concluded she would let him *try*. So she dressed him up the best she could, and he started off, after being told where to go. He entered the grounds and was making his way eagerly into the palace, when he was intercepted by two armed soldiers with their guns pointed at him, who ordered him away with rough language. As he walked down the pathway crying, he met another boy, who inquired what he was crying for. Said the little boy :

“I wanted to see the Queen, for I have heard that she loves little children.”

So the last said : “Put your hand in mine and come with me, and I will take you to the Queen.”

As they approached the soldiers they raised their hats, and the two passed into the palace and into the royal presence. The Queen inquired of her son for what purpose the little boy had come. And the son answered : “I found this little boy crying, and when I in-

quired of him for what he was crying, he said he wanted to see you."

Then the Queen said to the poor little boy: "For what reason did you wish to see me?"

"Because," said the boy, "I have heard in my Sabbath-school that the Queen of England loves little children, and I wanted to see her."

The Queen was greatly moved by the little boy's answer, and received him with all the favor becoming a Queen.

So we—poor little children—obtain access to our heavenly Father by his Son Jesus Christ. And through him we may come boldly to the throne of the heavenly grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need.

"I LEARNED A LESSON FOUR YEARS AGO."

Said a clergyman, as the language of a Christian lady: "I learned a lesson four years

ago in the Fulton street Prayer-meeting. I had written out a very earnest request for the prayers of the meeting for the conversion of my daughter. When the leader read it, he paused and said, ‘This seems to be a very earnest request. I advise this mother to do this one thing—lay this request on the altar before Jesus and never take it away, and she may be sure Jesus will never lose sight of it. That daughter will be converted.’ ”

CHILDREN'S REQUESTS.

Very often a tender interest is awakened by applications made by young children on their own behalf, such as the following :

“ FEBRUARY, 1870.

“ Dear friends in the Fulton street Prayer-meeting, I want you to pray for me, a little boy eight years old, and my two little sisters. I think we are all trying to serve Christ ; and I read the other day about so many people being converted in answer to your prayers, I

thought I would ask you to pray for us, that we may become true Christians."

A substantially similar request came to the meeting from a little boy in Georgia. Also, one a few weeks ago, from Alleghany county, Pennsylvania, from a little boy eleven years old. He had read of the conversion of Scovill Haines, Mount Collum, and he wanted to find the same way to Jesus.

A few days ago, another letter came from this same boy, saying he had sought and he had found an interest in Christ, and he expected to be admitted into the church at the next communion.

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CHAPTER IX.

SEAMEN.

SOME men of the sea are regular attendants at the meeting, and it is rare that there are not one or more present of those who still “go down to the sea in ships.”

A WHOLE SHIP'S CREW CONVERTED.

A sea-captain had been converted, and became filled with a very great longing for the conversion of his men, *seventeen* in number. He went to prayer-meetings in various places, and expressed his desire for the salvation of his men. He would say: “I am going on a voyage, and I want all my men to become Christians before I return. I want my vessel to be a place of prayer. I want it to be the birth-place of the souls of these men. I

want the prayers of my Christian friends, that all my men may be converted. I will pray and labor daily to bring them to Jesus. to become savingly acquainted with Him whom to know is life eternal. I must have all my men for Jesus."

That captain and his unconverted crew went to sea. One of the first things he did was to establish family worship, requiring all his men to be present ; also, he instituted religious service on the Sabbath, and invited his men to be present. He did all in his power to make these services interesting and impressive. He did not conceal his great anxieties from his men that they might find the same Saviour he had found. He told them the story of his own experience, when he found out what a great sinner he was. He told them how his heart and life had been held up for him to look at in the light of God's holy word. He told them of his shame and despair ; and also of the love of Jesus in giving Himself up unto death for just such a

poor sinner as he was. He told them of the joy that seized upon his heart when he was first led to believe that his sins were all forgiven. He told them how precious Christ was to him, and what happiness he had in believing on Him.

It was not long before he saw that a spirit of deep seriousness and awakening had taken hold of these sturdy men of the sea. And then he redoubled his persuasions and importunities that they should lay themselves at Jesus' feet.

And they began to inquire : " Captain, how did you do it ? How did you believe in Jesus ? "

" Well," said the captain, " I'll tell you how I did it. I found myself on a lee-shore, and going into the breakers as fast as I could drive before a gale of wind. I said to myself : ' Captain, this will never do. You are lost if you go on this way. You must about ship at once and claw off shore, and you have

just a minute to lose. You have been steering a very bad course, and here you are, almost in the breakers.' So I said to myself.

"My resolution was taken. I piped all hands on deck—all my bad passions, all my wicked habits—I piped them up, and I heaped upon them bitter reproaches. I pointed then to the awful breakers that were already roaring in my ears. I reproached them with being my ruin; and now you will see what I will do with you. I will heave you all overboard, and overboard you go from this very moment. I am taking on board another crew, and a good Pilot who will take me safe out of this. He is able and willing, and He has promised, and I believe Him—and overboard they went. As good as my word was I to my new Master, who turned in and helped me, and helped them over. Oh, what an awful crew I got rid of, and what a blessed Helper I took in. I, with His help, put the ship about, and got into safe water and

smooth sailing, and I am running to harbor—the harbor of eternal rest.”

“Come, shipmates,” the captain would say, “come, pipe the old crew up, all up; all your old sinful ways, all the bad passions of the soul, and just say to them: ‘Here is an end of it.’ Drive them in the name of Jesus over the side and into the deep, and you shall see them no more forever. Drive them over. Call on Jesus, the great Captain, to help you get rid of them. It must be all of Him, and for Him, and to Him—all of His infinite mercy and grace. Come, believe in Him, and you shall be saved, every one of you.”

A few days ago that captain came into port, brought all his men in; every one had become a Christian. Oh! God hears prayer! God rewards Christian effort when performed in the name of Jesus and for the sake of Jesus. One after another of his whole crew had bowed their hearts to Prince Emanuel, and had acknowledged Him Lord to the glory of God the Father. “He that convert-

eth the sinner from the error of his way shall save a soul from death, and shall hide a multitude of sins."

ANOTHER.

A very similar case was afterwards mentioned, as an illustration of the necessity of using means for the conversion of men in connection with prayer.

A ship captain was converted in answer to prayer. He was filled with an all-absorbing desire to win souls to Christ. He was about to go to sea with a crew of *nine* men. He longed to see them all become Christians. He prayed for them. He asked others to pray for them; and when he put off on his voyage, his prayer was that he might bring them all into port "new men in Christ Jesus."

He established family worship, and invited his men to be present. He could not conceal from them the great desire of his heart.

He did all he could to interest them. He called them together for religious services on the Sabbath. At length one and another began to be awakened, and came with inquiries how they might become Christians. The other day he came into port with his *nine* men—all hopefully converted.

MEN OF THE SEA.

A clergyman said: "When I came to this city to begin my labors among the men of the sea, one of the first things I did was to come to this meeting and ask you to pray for spiritual prosperity and a continual harvest of souls. This was six years ago. We gathered one hundred into the church during that winter, and God has graciously answered prayer. We are gathering the ripened harvest all the time. We have received hundreds since. Last night, more than twenty men were up for prayer—concerned about their own salvation. No men are more accessible on the

subject of religion than these men of the sea. I come again asking prayer for them. I ask you to pray for the plentiful shower. You may be assured you cannot pray in vain. God does hear and answer prayer."

PRAYER AND LABOR NEVER LOST.

The leader of the meeting, who was a clergyman, said he went into a car on his way to the meeting, and took a seat by the side of a sailor. Looking on his cap, he saw the word "Oneida."

"Are you a sailor?" said the clergyman.

"Yes," said the man.

"Were you on board the 'Oneida' which was lost in the Japanese seas?"

"I was."

"Are you a Christian?"

"I hope I am."

"When did you become a Christian?"

"When the ship was sinking, I called to mind all my mother's instructions. They had

been given in great earnestness, and came up before me afresh with my earnest mother's entreaties and prayers; and there I consecrated myself to the God of my mother. And I hope I am a Christian."

Now see how God can make the prayers and faithful labors of a poor, pious mother to be effectual for the salvation of a sailor son away from her in a sinking ship—sinking in the ocean—half round the globe, away from the scenes of that mother's instructions and prayers. It is a common phenomenon that all a man's life comes rushing up to his mind when he is on the point of dying. It passes before him like the scenes of a panorama, and in a few moments a man has all his life in review. We know not how this is; by what strange operation of the mind. But so it often is: a man does need to be actually dying to have this peculiar experience. It may come in any moment of imminent peril. So it did come in the case of the sailor.

OUT OF THE HORRIBLE PIT.

A well-dressed man arose in the back part of the audience, and spoke with great earnestness of the great salvation found in Jesus Christ. "How thankful I am that my feet were ever taken from 'the horrible pit.' Oh! it was truly a horrible pit from which I was taken. I was a poor, miserable, ragged, disgusting and ignorant, drunken sailor, reeling about the drinking-holes of New York. I was the vilest of the vile—too far gone, as my best friends believed, ever to be saved. I was so ignorant I could not read a word. Now I can read God's most holy book as well as any of you. And God is pleased to give success to my labors to win souls to Christ. I believe some souls will get to heaven, brought to believe in Jesus through my humble instrumentality. I was once a rotten wreck on the ocean. Now I have got into port, and have been overhauled and have been prepared for my final voyage, made sea-

worthy by divine grace, and fitted to withstand the severest storms which may come against me, and get safely into port on the other side. Once I had no comfort. But I cannot tell you what comfortable times I have now. I am in good employment. I have a good Master, who pays me good wages, feeds me on the finest of his stores, and commands his choicest blessings on me."

IN THE GUN-ROOM.

On one occasion a clergyman spoke with great fervor and tenderness of the fulness there is in Christ, and of the blessedness of peace in believing.

As soon as he ceased speaking, "a man of the sea" was on his feet. He was a stout-built and physically powerful man. His countenance bore the marks of great decision of character. All eyes were turned toward him as he said: "I was, as I hope and believe, converted on board ship, away down

in the gun-room. I went down there alone, under a weight of distress on account of my sins which I can never describe. I was cut off from all hope, and I felt I was a ruined and lost man for time and eternity. I went to tell Jesus.

“I dropped down upon my knees and cried, ‘O God, be merciful to me a sinner—for *Jesus’ sake*—FOR JESUS’ SAKE!’ In a moment, on uttering that cry of my heart, I seemed to find that Jesus was coming on board my sinking bark, and speaking such comforting words to me, and saying, ‘Be not afraid. Behold, it is I!’ Oh, what a welcome I gave him—such a welcome. It was no vision—no dream—not the least of it. It was Jesus himself, who was come on board and offering himself as my pilot, to steer me through the intricate and dangerous channels and bring me safely into the blessed haven whither I would come.

“You know what we must do as ship-masters when we take a pilot on board. We must

give up the ship to his command, and we must be swift to obey his orders. Now I have no fear. I know what my glorious Pilot can do to bring me safely into port.

“Winds may howl, and tempests blow, and billows roar and roll mountains high; but I have no fear. I know I shall make the happy and blissful shore of eternal day.”

The seaman spoke with great animation, and with a radiant face.

Instantly an old experienced sailor was on his feet engaged in prayer. He thanked God for the light that was breaking out upon the sea, and that shone into his poor benighted heart when he was away in mid-ocean, where he had none to tell him how to believe in Jesus; yet Jesus himself became the interpreter of his own Gospel to his soul, and led his heart to embrace him. “O Lord Jesus,” he continued, “Thou knowest how truly my joyful heart can say, Whom have I in heaven but Thee? And there is none upon earth that I desire besides Thee. Thou art the chief

among ten thousand. My lips cannot speak Thy praise as my heart can ; for my heart sings one unceasing anthem of praise to Thee every hour of my life. Oh, have mercy upon these anxious souls before Thee to-day, and lead their hearts to make a full surrender to Thee. Let none go from this house to-day strangers to Thee. O Jesus ! talk to these poor souls here before Thee, and show them the crown of thorns and the great drops falling to the ground, and the prints of the nails in Thy hands and feet, and the place where the spear pierced Thy side ! Say to them, ‘Be not faithless, but believing.’” We will not attempt to follow him any further. It was a melting prayer, and brought tears to many eyes.

CHAPTER X

THE INTEMPERATE AND PROFANE.

It has been observed that requests for prayer make very frequent mention of those who are stepping into the drunkard's grave. The sin is fearfully prevalent, and most difficult to overcome. The instances cited encourage hope of rescue, and stimulate to effort and prayer.

WHAT THE GRACE OF GOD CAN DO.

A gentleman arose who was a stranger in the meeting. He said he wished to speak of the power of divine grace to bring a lost and perishing sinner to Christ. The case on his mind was that of a young physician who had fallen into such extreme habits of intemperance that there was little hope of his reformation or salvation. He was found almost literally in the gutter by a student in the Theo-

logical Seminary, and induced to take the pledge. He was also assisted to keep it by making some provision for employment, so that he could support himself. But, after a little time, he fell, and became as helpless and hopeless as ever. The poor man, feeling his undone condition, applied to his theological friend for help again.

“No, no !” said the student, “I will have nothing more to do with you. I helped you once and you have broken all your promises, and I shall never have confidence in you any more. I will have nothing more to say and nothing more to do with you.”

“In this despairing condition I found him,” said the speaker, “and I remembered that God hath long patience with us, so we should have with the poor drunkard. I went to work to try to save him. I succeeded in getting his name to the pledge again, and I did more—I persuaded him to put all his trust in Christ, to enable him to stand up and be a man, true to his calling as a man and a Christian.

“And where do you think that physician is now? In a city in Ohio, well established in business, and doing great good in preaching Christ and Him crucified. We must not be too easily discouraged. We must go after men again and again, and snatch them from the devouring fire.”

Another case illustrated the power of divine grace in the same way. A brother said :

“A woman came to me one day and said : ‘I wish you would pray for my husband. Oh ! he is such a drunkard ! He will soon be forever lost if the Lord does not intervene by his grace to save him. I wish you to pray for him, and try to save him.’ I did pray for him then and there. I felt my heart very much called out to pray and labor for that poor man’s salvation.

“I got him to sign the pledge. I got him to the place of prayer. The wife was a lady of property in her own right, which she had made herself, in a business which she had pursued for many years. I told her : ‘Now

you must help him—help him to keep the pledge—help him to be a Christian; and in business matters don't you cross but aid him, and let him have his own way; don't cross him. God is leading him, and you must be careful that you do not let him be disheartened.'

"One day this husband went to his wife and said: 'Wife, I want to build a house on that vacant lot of yours. It is a very nice lot, and well situated; it is a pity it should not be improved and be bringing in a handsome income.'

"'Well, my dear husband, do just what you please about it,' said the wife.

"So he went to the builder and the lumberman, etc., and they talked and talked, and it all ended in talking. They would not entertain any of his propositions. He went to his wife and told her, saying: 'These men do not encourage me. I can *do nothing*.'

"'Well,' said the wife, 'I guess I can fix

that. I will write a note to them, and you may read it before I send it.' She sat down and wrote this: 'Any contract you may make with my husband will be all right,' and to this she signed her name, which was good for seventy-five thousand dollars. That was a great step to restore him to confidence in himself, confidence in his wife, and confidence in the community. This man is now an earnest Christian."

THE LOST SON RESTORED.

One day a clergyman well advanced in years took the floor, as he had often done in former years. He is stoutly built and of commanding presence, but carries in his features an expression of benignity and humility. He said:

"I have been at death's door, in the judgment of my friends, since I was last in this sacred place of prayer. I have been where I needed the consolations and assurances of

hope through the Gospel, and I have had them in a large measure. As the world receded, there was nothing which stood out so grand and glorious as the amazing love of Christ in saving such sinners as we, with such a wonderful salvation. My brethren, when near to death you will find, if you have your reason, that nothing will stand out so great and glorious as the vast atoning work of our Lord Jesus Christ. It is the grand truth of the Bible that whosoever believeth in Him shall not perish, but shall have everlasting life. When you reach the shore of the dark river you will know, as now you cannot, how precious that great and fundamental truth becomes to the soul of a dying man just stepping in the Jordan of Death.

“God has graciously raised me up, and I am here to-day for a special purpose. I have often in years past, when here, asked you to pray for my only and dearly beloved son. He is twenty-four years old, and when the war broke out he went into the army. He was

very young, and he got under the influence of camp-life and camp-vices. He became intemperate, and the habit of drinking to intoxication got hold upon him with an iron grasp. It seemed impossible to break away from it or to resist it.

“His mother and myself were in an agony of distress over the fall of our unfortunate boy. We prayed and we asked everybody we could to pray for him. I have been into many prayer-meetings, and in many places, and have asked for prayer for my poor son.

“I consecrated that boy to Jesus the moment he was born. It was the great desire of my heart that he should be a missionary. I wanted him to preach the unsearchable riches of Christ. But he seemed completely lost, and given over to destruction. We tried every way to reform him—*every thing*. All that a father's and a mother's love could do or contrive was attempted, and all in vain. Nothing would do the work we wished to accomplish.

“Four weeks ago to-day that son was converted, and it was such a marvellous conversion! It was an astonishment to us and to all our friends. The change was so great that we could scarcely believe it. I was so bewildered by it that I often said, as I was meditating upon it, ‘Is it really true? Am I myself? Is this John? Are all these things real?’

“Well, my brethren, they are real. I never witnessed a more marked change in any human being, and I have had large experience in religious changes. I cannot doubt my boy’s conversion any more than I would doubt my own.

“Can you wonder that I had a special object in coming to this meeting? I was in a hurry to ask you to join your thanksgivings with mine to the great Hearer and Answerer of prayer. Surely there is power in prayer. I hurry from place to place where I have asked the prayers of Christians, to have them join in our thanksgivings.

“I cannot tell you how humbled I am in view of this great goodness. I cannot tell you how great the grace seems to me! It is surprising indeed!”

Prayer and thanksgiving followed each other in quiet succession, for the old minister spoke with an unction which touched every heart, and in looking around we saw many wiping away the tears. We can do no justice to the scene. But little was said afterward in exhortation, but much was said in prayer and praise. The place became a Bochim.

A HUSBAND REGAINED.

Once, when several cases of answer to prayer were mentioned, particular interest was awakened in the instance of an intemperate man, who had abandoned his pious and suffering wife and family, and gone off in a fit of desperation. The poor heart-broken wife sent to the meeting to pray for his return and

reformation. A Baptist clergyman brought the request for prayer, and to-day he brought the thanksgiving of the wife for the answer.

"I have seen that wife," said he, "this morning."

"Is he back again?" I inquired of the woman.

"He is back again," she answered.

"Does he come back drinking?"

"Not a drop."

"Does he come back penitent?"

"Oh! sir," she replied, "he came back begging that I would forgive him, so piteously, that I could but do it."

"Are you both reconciled?"

"We are both reconciled," she replied.

"That is right. Now show your husband how truly you have forgiven him, and how ready you are to assist him to break the chains that have bound him."

The dreadful desecration of the name of God, which prevails so alarmingly, and, since

the war, so increasingly, often attracted notice in the meeting.

MOUTHS FULL OF CURSING AND PROFANITY.

“I wish to bring before this meeting the custom of profane swearing which so extensively prevails all over the land,” said one. The land is full of cursing and bitterness. The late war taught dreadful lessons in the “art of swearing” to our young men, and few who went into the army came back uncontaminated in this respect. We are so accustomed to hear the language of profanity that we have become hardened to the use of it. Men talk to us and intermingle oaths with their conversation, and we give them no reproof. Even ministers of the Gospel will stand and hear this dreadful language of profane swearing and “take it patiently,” as an infliction which is to be endured. Even some of these ministers, in repeating the conversation of others, will repeat all the profane expressions which may be mingled with it.

“I have been astonished and disgusted by hearing profane language coming from a clergyman’s mouth, even though it was quoted from another. I once was young and now am old, yet I have never allowed a profane expression to pass my lips, though I have been much in the armies of two wars. I consider the man as totally disregarding all duty who neglects to reprove this vice wherever he meets it. He must be wise and discriminating as to time and manner; but at the same time he must be fearless and bold.

“I travelled once in a stage-coach with some officers. The profane swearing was awful. After getting into the stage from our breakfast, having travelled all night, I said to them :

“ ‘Gentlemen, I have one request to make. I notice you all use profane language. You have heard none from me. My request is this : that I may have the privilege of using the first profane expression of the day. Do you agree to it?’ They nodded assent. They

looked surprised, but said nothing. When we alighted at our next stopping place, I noticed them all talking together. At length one of them came and said :

“ ‘Are you a clergyman, sir?’ I answered, ‘I have the honor of belonging to the clerical profession.’

“ ‘I thought so, and said as much to our company of officers,’ said he, and added, ‘We all thank you for your delicate way of reproving us. It belongs to our code of honor never to swear in the presence of a lady or a clergyman. It is a foolish habit, I know, and I am determined to break it off. If you had reproved us in any other way, we might have resented it. But your reproof was so administered as to be inoffensive, and we are heartily ashamed of ourselves. Will you please excuse us, and you shall hear no more profane language from us.’ ”

THE DISGRACE OF SOCIETY.

At another time a speaker on the universality of this vice said :

“It is the shame and disgrace of our civilization, not to say our Christianity, that we are so given up to this wretched and disgusting vice. We hear profane language everywhere. We sowed the seeds during the war, and a whole generation will reap the harvest. God have mercy on us as a nation, for we are a people of evil-doers.

“I am glad that some of our religious papers are speaking out against this abomination, and pulpits teem with rebukes. Let it be held up as a sin and a curse till it shall come to a perpetual end, and the whole land shall be purified. We ought never to let the opportunity pass that we do not rebuke this sin till it shall hide its diminished head. Let all Christians rebuke the profane swearer who uses profane language in his presence, and the practice will eventually cease.

“True, we must use skill and sagacity and good judgment in administering reproof. The Rev. Dr. Plummer was once riding on the box of a stage-coach, alongside of the driver, who was a Jehu in his line of no common order. He was profuse in his praises of his team, and especially one of the wheel horses. He praised all his points, interlarding his praises with oaths. ‘You have omitted one good point,’ said Dr. Plummer, with a twinkle in his eye.

“‘What is that, sir?’ said the driver, ‘What is that? I have studied that horse over and over, and I did not think there was anything about him that I did not know. What is it you have discovered?’

“‘Well, sir,’ said the doctor, ‘it is this. We have rode so many miles, and up to this moment I have not heard a profane word out of his head.’

“The driver looked at the doctor in surprise, and there was that same demure look with the twinkle in his eye.

“‘Thanks, sir,’ said the driver. ‘Thank you. You made a good point, and I think I will try to go as long without swearing as my horse will.’ It was a word fitly spoken.

“Let us all try to reprove as wisely and as well, and we shall gain those whom we reprove.”

WASHINGTON'S ORDERS.

Allusion was frequently made to the detestation of this practice, so often expressed by the father of his country.

One of his general orders on the subject was issued as early as within a month after the Declaration of Independence was made. Its text runs thus :

“The general is sorry to be informed that the foolish and wicked practice of profane cursing and swearing, a vice hitherto little known in an American army, is growing into fashion. He hopes the officers will, by example as well as influence, endeavor to check it, and both they and the men will reflect

that we can have little hope of the blessing of heaven on our arms, if we insult it by our impiety and our folly. Added to this, it is a vice so mean and low, without any temptation, that every man of sense and character detests and despises it."

A year or two afterwards, he recurred to the subject, and used still stronger language, as follows :

"Many and pointed orders have been issued against this unmeaning and abominable custom of swearing—notwithstanding which, with much regret, the General observes that it prevails, *if possible*, more than ever. His feelings are continually wounded by the oaths and imprecations of the soldiers whenever he is in hearing of them. The name of that Being, from whose bountiful goodness we are permitted to exist and enjoy the comforts of life, is incessantly imprecated and profaned in a manner as wanton as it is shocking. For the sake, therefore, of religion, decency, and order, the General hopes and trusts that offi-

cers of every rank will use their influence and authority to check a vice which is as unprofitable as it is wicked and shameful. If officers would make it an invariable rule to reprimand, and if that does not do, punish soldiers for offences of this kind, it could not fail of having the desired effect."

CHAPTER XI.

CHRISTIAN ACTIVITY.

THE SMALLEST CHRISTIAN IN HEAVEN.

A CLERGYMAN said that in the time of Christ there was probably more than one example of a man who had a withered hand. There might have been many others like the one whom Christ met, with a hand hanging down by his side perfectly useless, and commanded to stretch it forth. It was utterly useless and helpless. All the poor man could do, to whom it belonged, there it would hang, and the will of the owner had no power over it.

It seems strange how many men now-a-days—ah! and women, too—are in our churches with withered hands. They can touch no kind of work, can do no kind of service, no matter how pressing the service or

binding the duty. No amount of urging or expostulating can move them.

They have always a ready argument against even an attempt at effort. They say, "Don't you see my hand is withered? How can I do anything?" And so they never attempt to do anything. They are members of Christian churches. But the work of the Christian they never expect or intend to do. They have a name to live while they are dead. They are mere hangers-on to the life of others. They give no life to any one. They are utterly useless, yet their names encumber the church books.

One of these hangers-on lately had a dream—and a dream teaches wholesome truths sometimes, and so it did in this case.

She dreamed that she died, and was borne by two angels, and let down within the gates of the Celestial City. They stretched her out before them. She lay there as she lay when she was dying. One said to the other, in evident surprise

"What a little Christian!"

"Yes," said the other; "the smallest Christian, I am sure, that ever entered heaven."

"Let us get the golden measuring rod," said the first, "and measure her."

"No, no!" said the second angel, "let us do no such thing. She is not worth measuring."

This vision of herself, as "the smallest Christian in heaven," was the means of making her one of the most active Christians on earth; and when she gets to heaven, she will be welcomed as the good and faithful servant. She, who could find nothing to do in times gone, and so did nothing, now finds her hands full of labor, and she is working with all her might to win souls to Christ, and works not in vain. She is not a noisy Christian, but she is a stirring one. She takes a Sunday-school class of young ladies, and such is the spirit of faithfulness and benevolence that she can scarcely speak to one of her dear pupils before she is melted into a

flood of weeping. She can scarcely say, "Let us pray together," before both are upon their knees. She can hardly recommend Jesus as worthy of love and trust before a spirit springs up that is a fresh creation in that trusting heart, and it is made anew in Christ Jesus.

When this lady comes home to glory, she will not enter heaven with a withered hand. She will not be the smallest Christian in heaven. No—oh, no! She will come home to heaven with her crown all ablaze with stars of glory. She was reproved by her thoughts in her dream. Her Christian life had been all a dream before. But now it is all wide awake and real.

Oh! Christian sisters in this meeting, how much good you might do, if you would only stretch out your withered hands and get them restored.

NOT A SMALL CHRISTIAN.

The speaker said: I can tell you of a young lady, now gone home to glory, who was not a small Christian. She lived in the neighborhood of Boston. She was converted a few years ago. But there was nothing known that was remarkable about her conversion. She was quiet, sensitive, and retiring in her nature, and only those who knew her best knew what a spirit of love and desire for the salvation of others was wrapped up in her delicate frame. But it burned there with a hallowed flame, unseen by others.

This young lady never lived without objects of prayer on her mind. She always believed God would answer her prayers when she prayed for the conversion of sinners. She labored and prayed with this assurance of faith. She has been a few times in this Fulton street Prayer-meeting, and she has

brought here special objects of prayer which were cases of peculiar interest to her. Not until since her death have some of these facts of her life become known. She was intelligent, cultivated, earnest, yet so modest and retiring that few knew much about the objects of her religious anxieties. She walked on that high plane of faith and trust in Jesus, which some denominate the higher spiritual life. She never was discouraged, as to her faith, by the obstacles which surrounded the objects in regard to which it was exercised.

She always seemed to have a placid, quiet assurance that her prayers, offered up to God in faith, would be answered. She never lived without an object.

Let me give you some examples. She would send here requests for prayer. No one would ever know that she sent them. She not only asked this meeting to pray, but she followed prayer with efforts to win them to Christ. She was exceedingly lovely in her character, and this, united with womanly

modesty, made it easy to win her way to the hearts of those who knew her.

A few years ago she became exceedingly anxious for the salvation of two gentlemen in advanced life. Her anxieties were never confided to others except to a very limited extent. There was much about the circumstances and lives of both these men that rendered it very improbable to most men that they ever would be converted. They were far beyond middle life as to age, and both were peculiarly inaccessible on the subject of personal religion. It would be difficult for any ordinary person to approach them.

Yet this modest young lady entered freely into conversation with them on this all important subject. She wrote to them urging instant attention to the subject. She brought their cases here. When inquired of if she ever expected they would become Christians, she would say she had not a doubt of it.

One of these gentlemen was a railroad president. I knew him well. He was a man

of high standing in the community where he was known, very much respected as a man of high honor and integrity. His father and mother had been members, and his father an elder, in the Presbyterian Church. Both died years ago. This man was a supporter of the Church, and gave to religious objects, but personally he neglected the whole subject of religion, though always professing great respect for it. He rarely attended any place of worship on the Sabbath. Very seldom did he look into the Bible. He was a careless, worldly-minded man, not easily accessible on the subjects connected with his soul's salvation. His thoughts, if he had any, were kept locked up in his own bosom. His outward life was moral. He was too much of a gentleman to wound the feelings of his friends by any uncourteous remarks or criticisms on Christians or Christian professions.

This railroad president had pious friends—sisters, brother-in-law, nephews, nieces, ac-

quaintances and friends. He was often prayed for in this meeting. His case was brought here by those who felt a deep interest in his spiritual welfare.

He was taken suddenly ill. His illness was unto death from the very first. His pious sister attended upon him with the greatest assiduity—alarmed for his eternal as well as for his temporal life. Death came nearer and nearer with stately steps. At last he entered the sick man's chamber, who was in full possession of all his faculties, and when struck he knew whose hand had struck the blow.

His mind had been tender on the subject of his soul's salvation all through his sickness, and probably before, so far as we can judge.

When she saw that he was going, his sister inquired :

“Can you trust in Jesus?”

“Oh!” said the dying man, “I seem to see the gates of heaven wide open for just such a sinner as me.”

He continued in this calm and trusting state up to the last moment. And so he died.

Who shall say he was not saved? I cannot—because I believe one look of faith to Christ at any hour of life is eternal life to the soul. I know much is said against death-bed repentance. I do not encourage men to procrastinate. I warn men against it. But I believe in death-bed salvation. I believe in casting all on Jesus—no matter when—and I believe He takes the poor sinner's load of sins and blots all out forever. Feeble and late may be our faith—but if it is really faith—

“That soul, though all hell should endeavor to shake,
He'll never, no never, no never forsake.”

The other case was the following :

Some months ago a forwarding merchant in this city was stricken down at the Hoboken ferry as he was coming ashore, and being a stranger he was taken up and carried to the city hospital by the police. It was apoplexy. Search was made for him as soon as he was

missed. And he was found—prostrate, but having full command of his mind, so that he could understand and make himself understood. But he was a doomed man from the first. He had one foot in the grave, and the other was following it fast.

He lived ten or twelve days. He had a pious wife and pious friends whose minds were filled with great religious anxiety on his account. His poor wife had prayed for him for thirty years. He never seemed to have any anxiety for himself, yet he generally accompanied his wife to church and respected her Christian profession. He was an outward observer of the means of grace. But he was really a very careless man as to all the interests of his soul.

As soon as possible this man was removed to my house, and there began to be some hope that he would recover—though the physicians never gave much encouragement. His wife, who had great influence with him, endeavored to get some expression from him

of confidence in Christ. So great was his affection for her that he would have been glad to give her any assurance he could to that effect, knowing how anxious she was for him, and especially for his salvation.

When she would inquire, "Can you not trust in Christ?" he would turn his face to the wall and give her no answer. He was a man of truth, and he would not say he could, when he could not—and did not. Seeing the struggle in his mind, I went, and leaning over his pillow, said, "Do you believe that Christ came to save sinners?"

"Oh yes, I do."

"And opens the gates of salvation for you to enter?"

"Yes. Oh! rejoice—rejoice—rejoice!" This he said with great energy. His wife flung herself down on her knees, and shouted, "Glory to God, glory to God! SAVED AT LAST." He died in twenty-four hours.

Now there is one important fact to be added.

Both of these gentlemen had been written to by this gifted, modest young lady, who was often in this meeting. After their death her letters were found, in each case. She had done it so privately that outsiders knew nothing of it. But these letters are believed to have produced a profound impression on each. She, too, is gone now to her home. And it is believed that she is not the smallest Christian in heaven.

DO SOMETHING EVERY DAY.

A gentleman spoke of the importance of each professing Christian doing something every day, and it was astonishing how much we could do if we would only try. In all places, at all times, and under almost all circumstances, we should find opportunities to do something for Jesus, if we would only have a heart to improve them.

“Some time ago,” said the speaker, “I was in a distant city. I went to the prayer-

meeting, and there I found a woman who was very anxious for the conversion of a brother, who was accounted one of the ablest and most accomplished lawyers in the city. I said to this sister, ‘Why do you not go to your brother, and speak to him about the salvation of his soul, and tell him how anxious you are for him?’

“‘I have been to him often, and told him how I longed to see him a Christian; and he has taken me by the arm and led me out of his office. Then I have gone again, and the same thing has occurred. I have often been sent away when I was so burdened that I could not help going to him for the purpose of winning him to Christ. Now I want you to go.’

“Finally I consented; and calling in, I was received very courteously. ‘Being a stranger,’ said I, ‘and having heard that you are an able lawyer, I called.’

“‘I will attend to you in a moment,’ said he, holding in his hand a title-deed, which

he was scrutinizing when I entered. I said :

“ ‘I wish to consult you about a title, when you are at leisure.’

“He went on with his examination of the document which he had in hand, and when he had completed it, he made a low bow ; and then, turning to me, he said he would now attend to my case.

“I told him, having heard that he was a good lawyer, I had called to ask if he could tell if I had a good title to heaven. He looked amazed, but not displeased, and acknowledged that he was not well informed in regard to such matters.

“ ‘But how did you happen to come to me?’ said he, inquiringly.

“I told him I came at the request of his sister, and from her I learned that he had been made the subject of prayer at the prayer-meeting.

“ ‘Now,’ said I, ‘can you tell me what constitutes a good title to heaven?—the most

important thing for a man to know this side of heaven?'

"We conversed long and freely on the matter of a change of heart and life, as a pre-requisite to a good title to heaven, and the importance of experiencing the great change without the least delay. The conversation was direct, close and earnest; and I left him with the assurance that he would give all the attention to the subject that it demanded, both from its nature and importance.

"When I arose to go, he took me very warmly by the hand, and thanked me cordially for calling upon him. That lawyer is now well-informed, by his own happy experience, in matters that pertain to his own salvation, and a good title to heaven. So we should improve every opportunity to do good to others."

THE WOOD-CHOPPER.

A gentleman arose who resides on a farm at a distance from the city. He looked like a retired merchant or professional man. His address showed him to be a man of cultivation. He said, "I am a cultivator of the soil, and have men in my employ. I come from a district of farmers. I had a man employed in my timber lands, chopping wood, who was an outrageous despiser of all religion. I became exceedingly anxious for the salvation of that man. I prayed for him, and the more I prayed the more anxious I became. I made up my mind I must go out into my woods and have a thorough talk with him. I went, and found him alone, and told him what I had come for. I told him I had been praying for him, and was anxious he should become a Christian.

" ' You may spare your anxieties,' said he. ' If I have got to be like such a one and such

another one, I do not want to be a Christian. They profess to be Christians. I had much rather be as I am. Being like them would not improve me any.'

" 'Then you don't think they are Christians?'

" 'To be sure I don't.'

" 'Well, suppose they are not, and suppose I am not, and you are not, according to any profession you have made; and suppose we all die and go down to hell together—do you think it would be any consolation to you that you perished in such company?'

" 'Well, no; I do not think it would be.'

" 'You know you ought to be a Christian, and that you ought to make instant confession of your faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, for he is to be received by faith.'

" 'Well, I do not want such a religion as some of these people have got.'

" 'But you want RELIGION, and you must have it or be lost; and *religion* is believing on the Lord Jesus Christ, and receiving him

for all he is offered in the Gospel—no more, no less.’

“ ‘Well, *how* am I to make myself believe?’

“ ‘You are not to *make* yourself believe—you are to BELIEVE.’

“ I left him, not supposing that I had made any impression on his mind. But I continued to pray for him, as a hardened sinner.

“ About six months after that he called upon me one day, and said :

“ ‘I am to be baptized to-morrow—I and my wife.’

“ ‘Well, I am very glad to hear it. How has this come about? You did not believe in making confession of your faith in Christ once. How is this?’

“ I inquired with great anxiety, for I felt a deep interest in him.

“ ‘Do you remember the talk we had when you came into the woods to see me?’

“ ‘Yes, I remember it very well.

“ ‘Do you remember you told me I must

have RELIGION, and religion was believing on the Lord Jesus Christ, and receiving him for all he is offered—no more, no less ?’

“ ‘Yes, I remember it.’

“ ‘And you said I ought to make full confession of my faith in Him. To-morrow I am to make my public confession—myself and my wife—of our faith in him.’

“ ‘But why do you wish me to be there ?’

“ ‘Because, from the moment when you spoke to me in the woods, I never had any peace of mind till I believed in Christ Jesus as my Lord and Saviour. It was the same with my wife. We received him for all he was offered.’

“ ‘I went to the baptism, as you may well believe, and witnessed that wood-chopper’s public confession of his faith in Jesus. And he is now an ornament to his Christian profession. Oh ! let us take the suggestions of the Holy Spirit when He moves us to speak to impenitent sinners.’”

SOWING BY THE WAY-SIDE.

The missionary connected with the old North Church, mentioned the following :

“I was passing along the street,” said he, “and stopped to hand a tract to a man, who said :

“ ‘I don’t want it.’

“ ‘But,’ said the missionary, ‘you can just take, and read it or not, just as you please.’

“ ‘But I don’t want it,’ the man answered. ‘I am an infidel. I don’t believe the Bible. I don’t believe in any thing. I don’t hardly believe myself. I don’t know what to believe. I don’t believe in these things,’ looking upon the missionary’s handful of tracts with evident disgust. ‘I don’t want you to leave them,’ he continued.

“After a little persuasion, he consented to take a tract.

“The next day I was passing the same man—who was on the opposite side of the street—and he was beckoning me to come

over. As I did not pause, he beckoned more emphatically for me to come over. So I crossed over to him, and asked him what he wanted.

“ ‘Some more of your tracts,’ said the man.

“ ‘Did you read the one I gave you ?’

“ ‘No, I did not ; but I gave it away. I am an infidel, and do not believe in these things. I do not believe in what you call religion. I do not believe in any religion. I am a skeptic about every thing. But I will read what you give me.’

“ So I gave him some tracts, and invited him to come to my room for an interview and a season of prayer—not much believing he would come. I told him I had a friend who was once an infidel, and had been converted. He was called the Converted Infidel Lawyer. I told him I would like to have my friend have an interview with him. I would have him at my room. I did not much believe he would come, however.

“ To my surprise, at the appointed hour,

he came, and I had my lawyer friend present. After some conversation, in which he persisted in his unbelief, I kneeled down, and the infidel kneeled with me, and we engaged in prayer. I invited him to come again. I also told him of a place of preaching and prayer. The man had not been inside of a place of worship for many years. He showed himself not the least anxious about his spiritual welfare, and acted as though he had no reason for anxiety for any thing.

“When I went to the place of preaching and prayer again, to my surprise the man who did not believe in religion, or in any thing, was there. And when the time for the second interview at my room came round, the unbeliever was there, and also the converted infidel lawyer. The man was ready for argument. We told him we had no argument to offer. We must pray, and not argue. We must ask God to give us light, and lead us into the knowledge of all truth, and into obedience to the same. We earnestly exhorted

him to ask sincerely of God to teach him what to believe, and God would not leave him long in darkness, but would show him the light of an endless life. God, by his Spirit, could overcome his obstinate rejection of the truth, and could make him feel the power and *authority* of the truth as it is revealed in the Gospel of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. The converted infidel lawyer related some of the facts of his own experience, and exhorted him to throw away the miserable pride he had in saying he believed nothing, and just come to God as a little child who knows nothing, and ask God to humble thoroughly his heart and lead him as a poor ruined sinner to Christ, who is the Way, the Truth, and the Life.

“ Then they all dropped upon their knees, and the converted infidel poured out his full heart to God in most earnest supplication that this poor benighted man might be led and enabled by the Holy Spirit to apprehend Christ by faith as a Saviour, as he is freely

offered in the Gospel. As the case was very urgent, the prayer was importunate and earnest. And when they arose from their knees, the man who offered prayer grasped the other by the hand, and said :

“ ‘ You will become a Christian ; of this I feel assured.’

“ Now here I ask you to pray,” continued the speaker, “ that this man without any religious belief may be taught what to believe, and may be led to believe in Christ to the salvation of his soul. And I want all to feel how easy it is for us to sow seed by the wayside, and scatter beside all waters, not knowing whether this or that shall prosper, or both shall be alike good.”

WHERE ARE THE HARLAN PAGES ?

A speaker said : “ A long time ago, ‘ a new creature in Christ Jesus,’ when once he had evidence of the great change in having passed from death unto life, felt that he had an indi-

vidual, personal work to do; and his first impulse would be, in his new experience, to endeavor to win another to the love and service of Jesus. He went forth with the language of persuasion on his tongue—‘Come thou with us, and we will do thee good; for the Lord hath spoken good concerning Israel.’ There were then Harlan Pages, who made it their business to persuade their friends to become Christians. And what was *not* accomplished one day, was sought to be accomplished another. And so men were pursued, from day to day, with importunities to become reconciled to God. These personal efforts were crowned with great success.

“Now all is changed. The moment a young man or woman becomes a Christian, he or she is drawn into some society or organization where individual effort is merged in common effort and influence, and duties are delegated to the general body; whereas in former times it was felt that personal religious activity was the secret of success. If a hun-

dred new converts were to seek the conversion of a hundred others in the same community, it is easy to see how greatly the community would be moved. This casting off personal responsibility is all wrong. We want and must have our Harlan Pages."

IMPORTANCE OF CHRISTIAN EFFORT.

An elderly man said : We must believe the promises of God, and use means to attain the things promised. He went on to say that a few years ago he resided on a farm, and in the spring hired his hands for a year. He hired on one occasion a young man who was very skeptical on the subject of religion. It was his custom to observe family prayer. The first morning, as soon as breakfast was over, this young man made a push for the door. He called to him, and stated to him what his custom was as to family worship, and his wish that all his people should be present. The young man attended regularly after that, without any objection.

Some two years after that he was riding in a neighboring town, and as he was crossing a stream, he observed a crowd of people upon the bank a little distance off, and he stopped his horse upon the bridge to see what was going on. Soon a minister came up to him and said :

“Do you see that young man standing there in the crowd?”

“Yes,” he answered.

“That young man said, in giving an account of his religious experience, that he once lived in your family and worked for you a year, and that you insisted on his attending family worship—that at that time he was a firm unbeliever. But the step he then took led to a change in his religious opinions and to his confession of faith in Christ, and I have just baptized him in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.”

Now, do you believe that the young man would ever have been converted if he had

never attended the worship of God in the family? No! This was quite an important link in the chain of circumstances which was to lead to his conversion, though I knew it not.

So when we pray for the salvation of men, we must use some means to bring them to Christ. And if means as well as prayer are used, God in his own way will crown them with success. He thus requires us to show our faith by our works.

CHAPTER XII.

ASSURANCE OF FAITH.

IN the multitude of peculiar experiences brought before the meeting, not a few have proceeded from a misapprehension of the fullness and freeness of the provisions of the Gospel. The accounts which follow are of this class, and indicate the way of recovery.

THE DEACON IN DARKNESS.

There had been offered some requests for prayer for those who hoped their sins had been forgiven, but still walked in darkness, and were bowed down under a heavy yoke of bondage.

An old Scotch clergyman arose and referred to these cases, as illustrating the experience of some who receive the grace of God in vain, or half accepting the Gospel of salvation. They are always found in "Doubting

Castle," and have gotten no farther on their way. This same Fulton Street Prayer-Meeting has blessed many a poor soul to get out and go on in his journey to the Celestial Hills and the blessed gates of the Heavenly City. Here doubts have been brought and laid at Jesus' feet, to be indulged no more.

Some men are always employed in repairing damages—in re-confessing their sins and getting them forgiven over and over again. Instead of leaving them to be cleansed away in a Saviour's blood, they run over the whole black catalogue again and again, and are never free from the yoke of bondage. A good old deacon tells this to his minister, and wonders "how he can be relieved?"

"How can you be relieved?" A strange question. Now let me ask—Have you laid all your sins at Jesus' feet?—

"Laid your deadly doings down—
Down at Jesus' feet?"

Have you really done it?

"Why, yes ; I have really done it, I trust, many and many a time, and yet they return upon me."

"Return upon you ? How is that, when God says, 'Your sins and your iniquities will I remember no more forever ?' "

"I know—I know. But it seems impossible for my repentance to stay repentance. It comes up to be repented of."

"Are you a Roman Catholic, deacon ?"

"No—no ! Why do you ask ?"

"I mean that we sometimes may fall into the snare of a Roman Catholic devil and be all our life long in a sort of purgatory. If we have repented, we have been forgiven. We are reconciled unto God through the death of his Son. Do you believe that ?"

"Yes, I try to."

"That is not right. Trying to believe is *not believing*. You must believe God."

"Yes—yes !—I try to."

"Now, deacon, I remember your son stoutly rebelled against your authority some time

ago, and afterward felt sorry and repented of his sin, and very humbly asked your forgiveness. Did you forgive him?"

"Of course I did."

"What did you forgive him for?"

"Because I could not help it when I saw how sorry he was."

"And does he still ask for forgiveness?"

"No—no! Nothing is said about it. It is all settled forever."

"Now, do you believe that you can be better to your son than God is to you? He pardons like a God."

A man, who seemed to be a clergyman, said he was glad to hear the Gospel so admirably set forth. Few receive it in all its fullness, and hence few have its abundant consolations. Let us believe God in all his promises, and lay hold on the hope set before us.

A NEW APPREHENSION OF A GREAT TRUTH.

A man stood weeping at the door on the

breaking up of the meeting. He looked around to find some one to whom he could unbosom his mind. At length the missionary of the old church came along, and he seemed to see the very man he was looking for. So the weeping man approached him and inquired with great earnestness :

“Is it true, sir, what that young man said?”

“What did the young man say?”

“He said that the blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth from all sin.”

“Why, yes, that must be true, for the Bible says it.”

“Does the *Bible* say it?”

“Certainly the Bible says it, for that is where the young man got it. He would not know it if the Bible had not declared it. It is all true.”

“Well, this is very strange. I have been a member of the —— Church for years, have heard preaching, have read my Bible, and yet, until to-day, I never heard that the

blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth from all sin. Then this young man placed great emphasis upon that word *all*. Had he a right to do that ? ”

“ Surely he had. There is no more in the emphasis of the voice than in the word. We have the Bible for it.”

“ But this young man said the word *all*, as if it meant *ALL*.”

“ Well, you must use it the same way. You must make it mean all. All to your own soul.”

“ Must I ? May I ? May I ? ”

“ Surely, surely you may.”

“ Oh ! this is strange that I never heard this before. Oh ! this is blessed news. Indeed it is.”

“ Did you not believe you were saved by the blood of Christ ? ”

“ To be sure I did.”

“ How saved ? ”

“ Why, as I suppose others are saved—*a little at a time*.”

“No, that is not the Gospel. If you believe in Christ you are saved already. Every believer in Jesus hath everlasting life. Did you ever sing this hymn—

“There is a fountain filled with blood,
Drawn from Immanuel’s veins,
And sinner’s plunged beneath that flood
Lose *all* their guilty stains.”

“Did you ever sing it?”

“Why, yes, hundreds of times. But I never knew that *all* really meant ALL.”

“Well, it does really mean it. And if when you sing that hymn again, you will just notice what every line of that hymn means, you may derive much comfort from it, for it is full of meaning to saint and sinner.”

“Well, this is wonderful, that I should have lived all these years, and come into this meeting to find a whole gospel in one little sentence.”

“Where have you lived?”

“Away down South among ———, and we

have the Gospel preached every Sabbath, and yet I never heard or read that the blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth from all sin. I tell you that touches my heart. I have been a timid, weak Christian all my days—‘through fear subject to bondage.’ I always have a fear of sin, and a fear that I cannot be forgiven.”

He stood still weeping, and the tears flowing faster than ever. It seemed that this great truth deeply affected him. At length he said to the missionary :

“How may I know my sins are all cleansed away?”

“Do you believe in the Lord Jesus as your Saviour? Do you *know* him to be such?”

“Yes, I do. I think I know him to be my Saviour.”

“Just so you may know that the blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth you from all sin.”

It was a new apprehension of an old truth.

TRYING TO BELIEVE.

There is perhaps never a day in the Fulton Street Prayer-meeting that we do not have requests not unlike the following :

“ Will you pray for *me*? I am in great spiritual darkness. I have been a professor of religion for years, but I never had much spiritual comfort. I strive to live a religious life, but it all seems to be a forced unwelcome work. I am anxious to be saved, but my fear that I am not in the way of salvation, prevails over all things. And I am miserable through fear—fear that I shall be a castaway at last. Oh to be lost forever ! at the end of what I am endeavoring to make a religious life ! How dreadful ! Is there no help for me ? I am in the meeting to-day, and beg that you will join your prayers with mine, that God will disperse this distressing darkness and drive all fear away, give me joy and peace in believing in Jesus, and lead me to a full assurance of faith in Him.

In casting our eyes over the congregation we were not long in determining to our own satisfaction who was the author and subject of this request for prayer. There sat a lady in yonder pew, so deeply affected, as the meeting proceeded, as to be utterly unable to conceal her emotions. She was in evident and deep distress. Her face bore the marks of it, revealing the fact that there were pangs at her heart which no language can describe. She wept much of the time through the meeting. We resolved to meet her when the services were over, and invite her to disclose, if she would, more fully the cause of her sorrow.

She had been the subject of very earnest prayer by a clergyman who evidently had learned the "more excellent way." He prayed that the light might shine into this faint heart, as it had never done before; that if she had never been a true believer in Jesus, she might be a believer in Him to-day and forevermore, to the joy of her own

soul, and to the glory of the God of her salvation. The prayer was very touching. The minister who offered it is an excellent Baptist brother, whose ministry is greatly blest.

Our first words to the lady were, "Have you enjoyed the meeting?"

"I have felt thankful for the meeting," she answered, "I can hardly say I have enjoyed it. I cannot enjoy anything." This she said with a despairing tone of voice.

"Cannot enjoy anything—how is that?"

"I am a professor of religion, and am very anxious to be saved, but I fear that I NEVER shall be. I am under a yoke of bondage, through fear, every day of my life. It seems to me I shall be lost."

"How can you be lost, if you believe on Christ? He has said, 'He that believeth shall be saved.'"

"I know all that," she replied; "but how shall I know that I believe—that is the question?"

"No, that is not the question. The ques-

tion is, Do you believe that Christ means what He says?"

"I cannot question what He says."

"Cannot question! You ought not, but you do. You question that He means it when He says, 'He that believeth on *Me*, though he were dead, yet shall he live.' And again, 'He that believeth on *Me* hath everlasting life,' and a multitude just such passages as these—precious promises they are, but you do not believe them."

"What makes you think I do not believe them?"

"Because you say you are afraid you shall be lost."

"Yes, I am afraid."

"Yes; and you have full assurance of being lost. You have no doubt about it?"

"Yes, I have doubts about it."

"Then you stand between hope and fear?"

"Yes; sometimes one prevails and sometimes the other."

"Now there is no middle ground between

being saved and being lost. You must not try to make it. If you believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, you shall be saved. If you believe not, you shall be damned. You cannot be partly saved and partly lost."

"I know it, I know it," she replied, with deep emotion; "I know all about it. What shall I do? What shall I do?"

"Do? The easiest question in the world to answer. Do? Why, believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you shall be saved. It is not for you to say that you are between hope and fear. If you believe, you are saved already; and you shall never come into condemnation. Do you believe on Jesus Christ? Do you believe in His promises?"

"Yes, I try to believe.

"Oh, but that trying of yours is not believing. It is not, you may depend on that. You may be resting on this one little word of three letters, TRY, and stop there. Is it not so?"

"Perhaps it is."

“Are you not certain it is so?”

“No, not certain ; I try and try.”

“Yes, I fear so. And do you not feel as if God ought to save you for believing, if you *try* to believe? Trying is not believing. It is a great dishonor to Christ to say that you try to believe.”

“Dishonor!” she said, evidently alarmed. “I would not dishonor Jesus. You alarm me.”

“Ought you not to be alarmed? Would you not feel dishonored if some one should say to any promise you make, ‘I will try to believe you.’ Would you not feel that you had a right to be believed? Would you not feel indignant and insulted if one was using the same language as to yourself which you have used as to your believing in Christ’s promises? Besides, have you not felt that God was under obligation to give you assurance of salvation, because you ‘*try* and try’ to believe. Are you not making a righteousness of this trying?”

“Perhaps I am.”

“Perhaps you are? Ought you to allow any perhaps about it?”

“No; I know I should not. I will not. I must not. What must I do?”

“You must believe; and let there be no *trying* about it. But it must be BELIEVING; you see you are bargaining with God, that you will do so much if He will do so much; you will try to believe if He will assure you that you shall be saved and have eternal life. Is not this, if I may speak plainly, trying to drive a rather hard bargain. What do you give for what you ask to be given to you? Let us look this conduct of yours square in the face, and see what it looks like. It looks very much as if you were trying to get everything worth getting for nothing. You are ‘trying and trying’ to believe God. Why do you not tell Him so? On your knees, morning, noon, and night, tell God you are trying to *believe* him, and assure yourself that He means what He says.”

She looked up to me as if she was grieved at what I was saying, and said :

“ It is too shocking ; and yet I fear I have been doing just this, without intending it, or knowing it, and Satan has had me captive at his will. Henceforth my joyful prayer shall be : Lord, I believe ! Help Thou my unbelief ! ”

We saw her in the meeting the next day. The sad, miserable expression of countenance was all gone, and she was happy in believing in Jesus.

A MOTHER'S MISTAKEN ADVICE.

A clergyman once with great emotion related the following account of a passage in his early history :

“ I want to tell you of a great injury which was inflicted on me, in my early religious experience, by my devoted Christian mother.

“ I was hopefully converted, in the dead of winter, before I was twelve years old. For weeks I had been in an agony of anxiety be-

fore 'THE GREAT CHANGE,' and when it came, it translated me from a world of sorrow to a world of joy. For weeks I did not know that I was a converted boy—did not ask the question, and no one told me. But I was filled with an undying love for souls, and with abounding joy and peace in believing in Jesus. So great was my desire for the conversion of others, that I could not repress the expression of it. Consequently, I never let an opportunity pass by unimproved of speaking to others, especially my young friends, on the subject of religion. I never met one without saying a few words on the soul's salvation. As the first Sabbath of May approached—which was the time of the communion, when a large number was expected to join the church—I had a great desire to be one of the goodly company. Hitherto I had acted under the impulse of unabated love for Christ, and a sweet peace and happiness in him. Not a cloud was there in all my spiritual sky. I did not ask the question

whether I was a Christian or not. I felt that I loved Jesus 'above all others;' I knew that—and I believed that he loved me; and thus my peace and joy in believing flowed like a river. I could not conceal from others how happy I was.

"As the time drew near for the examination of candidates for admission into the church, my most dear and devoted Christian mother began to manifest some anxiety about my 'examination.' Now, no boy had a more loving mother than she was. One day she entered into a little dialogue with me, much like the following:

"'My son, do you wish to join the church?'

"'Most certainly I do, mother. Why do you ask? Don't you know it?'

"'Yes,' said she; 'I know it. But none but Christians have a right to be members of the church. You are a very little boy, and perhaps you are not a Christian. Perhaps you are deceived.'

"'Deceived! mother — DECEIVED!' said I,

almost gasping for breath. 'Do *you* think I am deceived?'

" 'Well, I hope not,' she replied, carefully watching my face. And then she added: 'It is a good sign to be a little doubtful.'

" 'Doubtful of what?' I asked.

" 'Doubtful whether you are a Christian.'

" 'Oh, mother! must I be doubtful? I am so sure I love Jesus, how can I be doubtful?' My anxiety rising at once, I could not understand.

" 'The best Christians, my son, have their doubts,' she said.

" I was thunderstruck. 'Do they?' I inquired. 'What makes them have doubts?'

" Here my mother seemed a little staggered for an answer. She was silent for some time.

" 'What makes them doubt?' I again inquired, with great earnestness.

" 'Look into your own heart, and perhaps you will find out.'

" 'Look into my heart? Why, I thought

I had only to look to Jesus, and to what he has promised !’

“ ‘ Yes ; but it is also said, Examine yourselves whether ye be in the faith.’

“ ‘ But, mother, don’t you remember how often I sing—

“ ‘ Jesus, I my cross have taken,
All to leave, and follow thee.’

Now, when I sing *that*, I sing it with all my heart. How can I have doubts ?’

“ My mother did not reply. She seemed to be anxious that I should not be too confident. But she said no more, and perhaps felt that she had said too much, and had thus destroyed the peace of her boy. Yet, she had spoken according to the theological notions of her time, and there she left the matter. I was to look into my own heart to solve the mystery of Christian doubting. And I did look into my own heart till all my comfort was gone, and almost all hope died within me. The communion came, and I

was received into the church, with enough doubting to make my examination very satisfactory.

“But the end was not yet. The more I looked into my own heart, the more hateful the sight became, and I was as a man looking down into a cavern a thousand fathoms deep, and at the bottom filled with snakes and lizards, and all manner of poisonous and disgusting reptiles. I looked and looked, till I was in perfect despair, and knew not what to do.

“In this miserable condition I lived for about two years, feeling convinced that I was as yet in the gall of bitterness and the bonds of iniquity, without *hope*, and almost without God.

“Without meaning it, oh, what an injury my mother had done me! The blasting influence of my mother's advice followed me into the ministry, and entered into all my experience and labors. It was an injury which was irreparable. It followed me up

to the establishment of this Fulton Street Prayer-Meeting.

“I bless God for this meeting in its influence upon my mind. I have come back to my first experience, and have cause to look, not *down* into the dark cavern, but to look *up* to Jesus, and to the blood that cleanseth from all sin. Years ago I felt almost afraid to hear a man repeat this passage in this meeting, ‘The blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth from all sin,’ for fear that he had some perfectionist notions, and only took this method of slyly letting them out. But, thank God, all that is past, and I can sing, with the understanding and with all my heart, the whole hymn—

“ ‘There is a fountain filled with blood,

Drawn from Immanuel’s veins ;

And sinners plunged beneath that flood

Lose all their guilty stains.’ ”

Repaired by
Bob Armstrong
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THE MASTER'S COLLEGE

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